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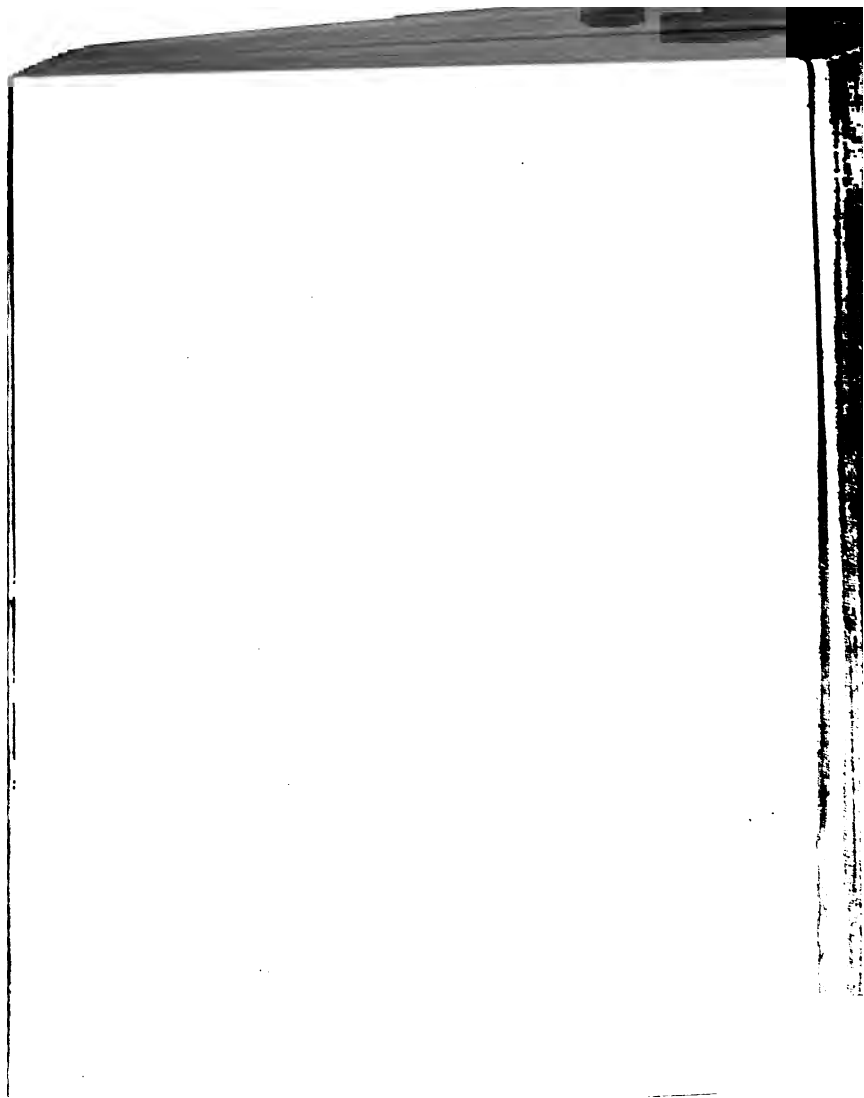
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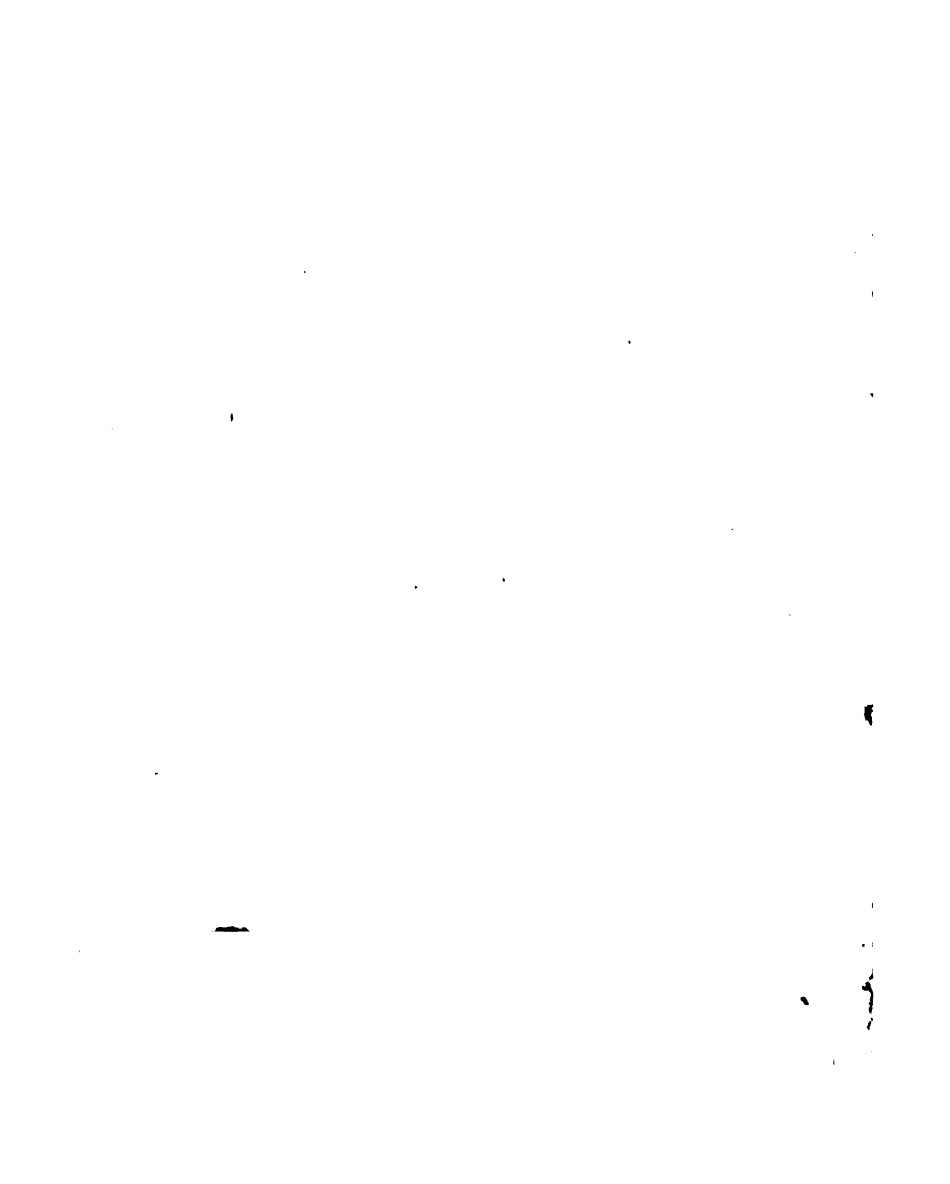


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**ISSUED TO MEMBERS OF**  
**THE SETTE OF ODD VOLUMES.**

**No. XLVIII.**

**The Mirror of the Century.**







THE  
**Mirror of the Century.**

BY  
WALTER FREWEN LORD,  
DOMINIE  
OF YE SETTE OF ODD VOLUMES.

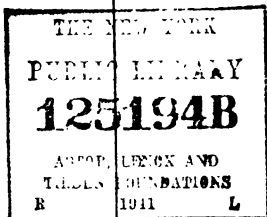
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*For and on behalf of Publication Committee of the Sette  
of Odd Volumes.*

*(Signed)*

*Paul Bevan.  
Max Pemberton.  
Alfred Daniell.*

*April 22. 1902,*



## The Mirror of the Century.

**N**O century of the Christian Era is more difficult to mirror than the nineteenth. At first sight, it may seem impossible that any one man should be able to reflect the social life of a century that opened with the England of the Regency, and closed with the England of King Edward the Seventh.

In other centuries an industrious writer might achieve something like an exact record of very nearly a century of social life. His first book will "throw back" so to speak, and will reflect the life of at least twenty years before the date at which he is writing. In the same way, his last book will "throw forward" (to abuse a

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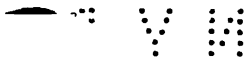
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phrase somewhat). So that with a fairly long period of activity we may look for something approaching the Mirror of the Century.

But, with the single important exception of "language," the England of 1900 is a different world from the England of 1800. The "masher" carries on the traditions of the "swell," the "buck," "the blood," the "macaroni." He is the proud descendant—if the somewhat degenerate descendant—of the "dandy;" but the circumstances in which he lives and moves and has his being are as different as "ping-pong" and "macao."

Are we, then, attempting a hopeless task, in trying to fix on one man from among the scores of the novelists of the last century, whose work may fairly be called the "mirror of the century."

Not altogether. The world we live in is, it is true, a different world from the world of D'Orsay, or the world of Lord Saltire—to



name a fictitious character hardly less vitally present to us. But then, the world that we live in has hardly existed for twenty years. Until the disastrous summers of 1878 and 1879, England was an agricultural country. Land had not become an object desirable to possess, like diamonds, but unremunerative, and delightful only because its possession flatters our pride. For more than three-quarters of the century land was hard to buy, farming was profitable, the prestige of the Squire was unimpaired ; mere wealth was not a password to social consideration, still less to respect.

In short, the bewildering transformation of England has taken place entirely within the last twenty years. A writer of 1880 wrote with ideas differing, it is true, from those of a writer of 1820. He wrote of a world the complexion whereof was somewhat changed from that of the world of 1820. But the difference between the face and the spirit of things as they were in

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1880, and the face and spirit of things as they were in 1820, is as nothing beside the change between 1880 and 1900. The "Duke's Children" and "Pelham," though separated by sixty years of eventful history, may stand side by side, and are not startlingly unlike. But a similar work written of 1900 would have hardly any relation to either of them. In point of fact, the last twenty years of English social life have not been treated with anything approaching fulness. The dreariest and most repulsive forms of introspection, disquisitions—half religious, half medical, and wholly repulsive—have appeared in plenty. But the healthy, vigorous life of England has gone by all the time unremarked (one would suppose) and unrecorded.

It must, then, be definitely prefaced that the last twenty years of the nineteenth century do not, for our purposes, belong to the nineteenth century. With this reserve, we can proceed

to examine the numerous novelists of the preceding eighty years, and probably discover one whose work may fairly claim to be the mirror of his time.

Even with the century thus cut down, we must limit ourselves. Two conditions must be fulfilled. Our candidates must (*a*) be prolific writers, and (*b*) be active over as long a period as possible. *Cæteris paribus*, a prolific writer will be of more use to us than the author of one consummate work. *Cæteris paribus*, the author whose work is spread over forty years is more valuable than the author whose literary life was but ten years long.

The novel has been called the "Epic of the Century." This is one of those charming phrases which read equally well, however they are turned. It is as reasonable to say that the century is the Epic of the Novel. But, in truth, the association of the epic and the novel is altogether forced. In the one we have simple

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incidents told in grand language; in the other we have the vastly complicated incidents of a highly-wrought civilisation set forth in language which is at its best for its purpose when it is felicitous rather than grand.

But there are at least six writers who may be claimed as the Mirror of their Century. There may be more: but the conditions herein laid down reduce the number of possible candidates to six; and it will be the object of this imperfect paper to select, if possible, one.

The six, then, are—Lytton, Beaconsfield, Thackeray, Dickens, Anthony Trollope and George Eliot.

Lytton began writing in the year 1827, and published "The Parisians" in 1873, the year of his death. As regards the condition of being active over as large a number of years as possible, he is a strong candidate, for his career covered forty-six years of strenuous literary life. Further, he was a prolific writer. He produced

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"Falkland" in 1827; "Pelham" in 1828; "The Disowned" in 1829, and "Devereux" in the same year. "Paul Clifford" appeared in 1830; "Eugene Aram" in 1832; "Godolphin" in 1833; and the "Last Days of Pompeii" in 1834. "Rienzi" was published in 1835; "Ernest Maltravers" in 1837; "Leila" in 1838; "Zanoni" in 1842; and "The Last of the Barons" in 1843. After an interval of five years "Harold" appeared, 1848; then came the "Caxtons," 1850; "My Novel," 1853; "What Will He Do With It?" 1858; "A Strange Story, 1862; "The Coming Race," 1871; "Kenelm Chillingly" and "The Parisians," 1873. "Pausanias" was a posthumous work. This does not include plays, verses, and political tracts; but we are considering Lytton solely as a novelist.

Was Lytton qualified to deal with so wide a range of human circumstances? He must be admitted to have been amply qualified. He

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came of a respectable county family, received a University education, and early entered on a life of pleasure and work, where his reputation grew, and grew deservedly ; for it was fed from many sources. He was a man of fashion, a sportsman, a playwright, a traveller, and a politician. He sat in the Cabinet and in both Houses, and he raised himself to the Peerage.

This is the record of a very full and active life. What is lacking to his work that we do not at once award to him the title "The Mirror of the Century"? In the first place, it is to be observed that eight of his works refer to other countries than England ("Rienzi," for example), or to earlier centuries than the nineteenth (like "Devereux"). This considerably reduces the amount of his output with which we are concerned. But there still remains enough to justify us in considering him. Why must he be condemned? For the reason, it is submitted, that he saw nothing as it was. His work is

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loaded with sentiment ; and much of it was hack-work, pure and simple. We have but to take up any one of his novels, and we realise before we have read six pages that he appealed to an ignorant public, and rested contented with their approval.

He never did justice to himself, still less to his subject, except when he wrote on supernatural topics. To these he was devoted : as he wrote he lost himself in his subject, and his vigour and culture had the fullest play. In other books, it is clear that he languidly and impatiently wrote what would sell ; he was brilliant, but devoid of literary conscience.

Next, in point of time, comes Lord Beaconsfield. He declared himself as "born in a library," and he certainly came of good literary stock : his father, Isaac, being not only literary but learned. The Disraelis were not wealthy, but they possessed enough for comfort eighty years ago. Benjamin Disraeli inherited a freehold estate, worth eight

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hundred a year, from his father. He entered the House of Commons at the age of twenty-eight, and raised himself through all the usual offices to an earldom and the knighthood of the Garter. This is a career even more strenuous, brilliant, and successful than that of Lord Lytton. His literary work—with which alone we are concerned—was better than Lytton's, for it was highly conscientious.

By preference he passed his life among men of authority and position. But when it was necessary for him to deal (in his works) with the lot of the humble and obscure, how hard he worked at the local colour! In particular, the low life of "Sybil" is as good as Dickens's, and far above the low life in "Paul Clifford." We have here then, a man of genius, whose own experience of life was exceptionally wide, and who was willing to take any amount of pains to correct his ignorance of whatever he had not personally experienced. What were his limitations?

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Firstly, the comparatively small number of his novels. He wrote "Vivian Grey" in 1827; "The Young Duke" in 1831; "Contarini Fleming" in 1832; "Alroy" in 1833; "Venetia" and "Henrietta Temple" in 1837. The famous trilogy "Sybil," "Coningsby," and "Tancred," appeared in 1844, 1845, and 1847, respectively. Then came a gap of twenty-three years. "Lothair" was published in 1870; and "Endymion" in 1880. He also published, at different times, "The Epic of Revolution," verses, plays, and numerous skits.

His literary activity thus extended over fifty-three years, and only one of his works, "Alroy," refers to a foreign country and a remote century.

But "Endymion" — published in 1880 — refers to the mid-Victorian epoch. It is concerned with the rise of Napoleon the Third, and contemporary incidents. The latest, in point of date, of his novels is "Lothair," which is at least

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concerned in the life of England down to the date of the Battle of Mentana. This is a serious drawback. Thirty and more years go untouched.

Otherwise, Lord Beaconsfield has claims to all our recognition. It is currently stated that there is "no heart" in his work : that his novels are merely political tracts. One wonders if "current opinion" is really deserving of the respect that we are accustomed to pay to it. "No heart" in "Alroy," for instance, in the affection of Alroy for Miriam? "No heart" in "Endymion," in the affection of Endymion for Myra? These are both brother-and-sister attachments; and the noble and touching narratives were probably inspired by Lord Beaconsfield's own experience. In both these instances we have pictures of the deepest affection of man for woman : each striving to understand and help the other through life, while admitting, without envy and without regret, how widely their paths must diverge.

No heart, again, in the relations of Lothair and Theodora? No heart in the love of Charlie Egremont for Sybil? Above all, no heart in "Henrietta Temple"? Here we quit speculation and interrogatory. For we rest on authority—that of my Lord Tennyson—when we say that "Henrietta Temple" is the best love-story ever written; and this is the judgment of one who spent his whole life in writing love-stories, and is admitted to have succeeded.

After Lord Beaconsfield, in point of time, comes the great name of William Makepeace Thackeray, the "St. Barbe" of "Endymion," who was born in 1811. We may as well at once admit that the choice lies between him and Anthony Trollope: very different men.

As regards poverty of output, Thackeray is in no better case than Lord Beaconsfield, for he only wrote six novels. These were: "Vanity Fair," 1848; "Pendennis," 1850; "Esmond,"

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1852; "The Newcomes," 1854; "The Virginians," 1858; and "Philip," 1862. Of these, "The Virginians" is a tale of the eighteenth century, and "Esmond" is a tale partly of the seventeenth and partly of the eighteenth century. We have, therefore, to examine the claim to be the "Mirror of the Century" on the part of an author who has written only four novels descriptive of the manners of that century. In considering novels only, we are omitting burlesques, memoirs, and sketches, the "Book of Snobs," and perhaps two dozen volumes of miscellaneous literature. As Mr. Thackeray died in 1863, nearly forty years of the century remain untouched by his books. When we remember that he produced only half as many novels as Lord Beaconsfield, and less than half if we only count the novels that dealt with the life of the nineteenth century, it is obvious that we are here in the presence of a claimant whose claims must rest entirely on the quality of his

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work, and in particular the representative quality of that work.

That work must be very good indeed to justify the claim; and, from some points of view, the work is, as a matter of fact, beyond praise and beyond criticism. The prose style of Mr. Thackeray is as near to perfection as any prose, not French, can expect to be. The narratives are perfectly constructed, the characters are not only alive, but have become part of the literary inheritance of our race, in a sense that no other characters have done since the demise of William Shakespeare at the same early age as Mr. Thackeray—fifty-two.

In fact, Mr. Thackeray's reputation stands so high that it is enough to daunt any critic. But we may take courage from our rules. We have laid it down that we are inquiring, not who is the greatest artist, but who is the most representative artist, of his century? And to that end we have found that Mr. Thackeray fulfils

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neither of our conditions of (*a*) a prolific writer, and (*b*) a writer active over a large number of years. As to the representative quality of his writing, it is totally lacking. He does not even pretend to be impartial. He sees nothing but what is ludicrous or discreditable. A great satirist he undoubtedly was ; and he lashed his time with merciless gibes and sneers. But there was much in his time that was not susceptible of such treatment. There was much that was deserving of respect and admiration. There were many virtuous nobles ; but Mr. Thackeray never, apparently, met any. There were some admirable clergymen, not a few geniuses on the Bench of Bishops, and an army of devoted labourers in humble paths. But you would never divine their existence if you judged of the Church from Mr. Thackeray's novels. Nor was it because Mr. Thackeray had a special spite against the Church that he so pitifully misrepresented it. To take a very




different profession—the civil service of India—we find precisely the same treatment adopted. We have two immortal portraits—Jos. Sedley and James Binnie. The one was a gross lout, cowardly and self-indulgent ; the other a genial little Scot, fond of his dinners and his guineas, and devoid of any distinction whatever. If we seek in Mr. Thackeray's novels for some hint of how that gigantic and romantic empire, the British Empire of India, was built up and maintained, we shall not find it. Nor shall we find, in any walk of life, anything portrayed except what is ludicrous or discreditable. There was much in English life in the nineteenth century that was both ; but there was more that was neither, and this Mr. Thackeray has missed.

In considering the work of Charles Dickens, who was born in the year 1812, and died at the early age of fifty-eight, we find ourselves face to face with a highly controversial question. Mr. Charles Dickens's reputation does not stand so

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high as it did thirty years ago, on the morrow of his death. Mr. Thackeray's reputation, on the other hand, stands even higher than it stood in the year 1863. It is even possible to say, unchecked, that "We cannot read Dickens": which would have placed one outside the pale of intelligent human beings thirty years ago. Some things are settled. We have agreed that his prose style was very bad; there are few apologists for his pathos. But when we set aside controversial matters, and enquire, merely, does he represent his century, we find that his claims are formidable. He was not born in very good circumstances, but he succeeded early, and succeeded so thoroughly, that from very early manhood he was enabled to lead a full and interesting life. His novels were numerous. He began with "Pickwick," published when he was twenty-four years of age, "Nicholas Nickleby," and "Oliver Twist" (the latter published in 1838, the former in 1839) and "Martin Chuzzlewit,"




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published in 1844. Then came an interval of four years. "Dombey and Son" appeared in 1848, "David Copperfield" in 1850, "Bleak House" in 1853, and "Hard Times" in 1854. "Little Dorrit," 1857; "A Tale of Two Cities," 1859, and "Great Expectations," 1861, were followed by "Our Mutual Friend," which was his last novel. It appeared in 1865, five years before his death. The "Mystery of Edwin Drood" was left unfinished.

This is a long list. What is to prevent us from acclaiming the creator of Sarah Gamp and Mark Tapley, Bumble and Count Smorltork, Sir Leicester Dedlock and Paul Dombey, David Copperfield, Eugene Wrayburn, Dick Swiveller and Traddles, as the Mirror of his Century? Nothing, perhaps. But there are some set-offs. In the first place, Mr. Dickens always had a moral to preach; and that is a bad beginning. Then, his experience was restricted. He had a tender heart, and loved the poor and lowly.

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But there was much in the nineteenth century that he was unacquainted with. All politics, all what the French call "le hig lif," was outside the range of his observation ; and he did not work hard to acquire some knowledge of it, as did Lord Beaconsfield in the low life, and Anthony Trollope in the political world. He was content to write well of what he knew ; and to caricature the rest. He may be said to have invented Christmas ; and he idealised the inexpensive but dismal form of recreation known as "going for a walk." It will help us, perhaps, somewhat, to take a figure from a sister-Art. If Fielding and Smollett drew men and women, Thackeray drew ladies and gentlemen, and Mr. Norris draws fine ladies and fine gentlemen. Even so Rubens painted men and women, Vandyck painted ladies and gentlemen ; and Gainsborough painted fine ladies and fine gentlemen. Whom shall we bracket with Mr. Dickens ? Obviously, George Cruikshank.



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To travel for once out of our chronological order, let us now consider the work of George Eliot, who was born in 1819 and died in 1880. Here was an artist if ever there was one. No other prose style gives so much pleasure, quite apart from the meaning conveyed by her sentences. The consummate polish, the perfect grace, of George Eliot's sentences display unimagined possibilities of English prose. She was immensely learned ; but not a prolific writer of novels. "Scenes from Clerical Life," 1858 ; "Adam Bede," 1859 ; "The Mill on the Floss," 1860 ; "Silas Marner," 1861 ; "Felix Holt," 1866 ; "Middlemarch," 1872 ; and "Daniel Deronda," 1876, complete the list. "Romola," published in 1863, does not refer to the social life of the nineteenth century. Here, then, is the same state of things that we found in the case of Mr. Thackeray. We have seven masterpieces ; are they enough to mirror a whole century ?

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Bias exists in George Eliot's writings, no doubt, but still not such violent bias as in Mr. Thackeray's. Her view of life is much calmer than Mr. Thackeray's; her powers of observation much less distorted. But nothing is studied later than 1865. We can fix that date, because the gaming-tables at Leubronn were still open, and we know that all gaming-tables were suppressed in Germany after 1866. So small a range of observation is a material drawback, and must decide against her if we encounter any other novelist whose work covers more ground.

Mr. Anthony Trollope was born four years before George Eliot, and survived her for two years. He wrote thirty-two novels, and his work got better and better in every respect as the years went on. This is the list: "The Macdermots of Ballycloran," 1847; "The Kellys and the O'Kellys," 1848; "The Warden," 1855; "Barchester Towers," 1857; "The Three

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Clerks," 1858; "Doctor Thorne," 1858; "The Bertrams," 1859; "Castle Richmond," 1860; "Framley Parsonage," 1861; "Orley Farm," 1862; "The Small House at Allington," 1864; "Can You Forgive Her?" 1864; "The Last Chronicles of Barset," 1867; "Rachel Ray," 1863; "Miss Mackenzie," 1865; "The Belton Estate," 1866; "Phineas Finn," 1869; "Phineas Redux," 1873; "The Eustace Diamonds," 1875; "He Knew He Was Right," 1862; "The Vicar of Bullhampton," 1870; "Ralph the Heir," 1871; "The Prime Minister," 1876; "The American Senator," 1877; "Is He Popinjay?" 1878; "John Caldigate," 1879; "An Eye for an Eye," 1879; "Cousin Henry," 1879; "The Duke's Children," 1880; "Ayala's Angel," 1881; "Dr. Wortle's School," 1881; "Marion Fay," 1882.

Was Mr. Trollope competent to write so much? What did he know? The answer rather is: What did he not know? He knew

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the hunting field, and all its incidents by heart. He knew the life of clubs ; he knew more of English and Irish country life than any man alive. He had visited the West Indies, the Australian Colonies, and the United States of America. He was perfectly familiar with the life of public offices ; the routine and detail of their business was his daily occupation for many years. He had concluded postal conventions ; he had stood for Parliament ; and what he lacked of knowledge of public life he endeavoured to supply by careful attendance at the Debates in the House of Commons.

Here is a range of experience beyond any novelist's of the nineteenth century, with the exception of Lord Beaconsfield. If such a man was competent to make use of his experience, there can be no resisting his claim to be called the Mirror of his Century. There was no man more competent. It was impossible for him to exaggerate : he had not the necessary

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imagination. He probably killed himself by overworking. His later work was better far than his earlier. His energy never flagged. His style was uniformly good. He had not the imagination of Lytton, or the brilliancy of Beaconsfield. He could analyse character; but he was not the consummate operator that George Eliot was. He saw things far more clearly and fairly than Charles Dickens, and he was a total stranger to the preposterous prejudices of William Makepeace Thackeray. We must remember our reserves: that the last twenty years of the century are quite different from all the others. But with this one reserve, we may fairly say that in any future century the student of social life will find all of the nineteenth century in the novels of Anthony Trollope.





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**15. Cornelius Walford: In Memoriam.**

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*NOTE.—The following Opuscula have not yet been presented in print to the Sette :—*

No. 35. The Early History of the Royal Society (Bro. Wheatley).  
*In the Press.*

[ No. 39. On Some Ideal Aspects of the Collector.  
For No. 34, see No. 11 of the Folia (*post*, p. 43).

## Miscellanies.

### 1. Inaugural Address

of His Oddship, W. M. THOMPSON, Fourth President of the Sette of Odd Volumes, delivered at the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen Street, on his taking office on April 13th, 1883. &c. (pp. 81.) Printed by order of Ye Sette, and issued on May the 4th, 1883. Edition limited to 250 copies.

### 2. Codex Chiromantie.

*Appendix A.* Dactylomancy, or Finger-ring Magic, Ancient, Mediæval, and Modern. (pp. 34.) Presented on October the 12th, 1888, by Bro. ED. HERON-ALLEN.

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### 3. A President's Persiflage.

Spoken by His Oddship, W. M. THOMPSON, Fourth President of the Sette of Odd Volumes, at the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen Street, at the Fifty-eighth Meeting of the Sette, on December 7th, 1883. (pp. 15.)

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### 4. Inaugural Address

of His Oddship, EDWARD F. WYMAN, Fifth President of the Sette of Odd Volumes, delivered at the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen Street, on his taking office on April 4th, 1884, &c. (pp. 56.) Presented to the Sette by His Oddship EDWARD F. WYMAN.

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### 5. Musical London a Century Ago.

Compiled from the Raw Material, by Brother BURNHAM W. HORNER, F.R.S.L., F.R.Hist.S., Organist of the Sette of Odd Volumes, delivered at the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen Street, on June 6th, 1884. (pp. 32.) Presented to the Sette by His Oddship EDWARD W. WYMAN.

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**6. The Unfinished Renaissance ;**

Or, Fifty Years of English Art. By Bro. GEORGE C. HARRÉ, Author of "Plant Studies," &c. Delivered at the Freemasons' Tavern, Friday, July 11th, 1884. (pp. 40.) Presented to the Sette by His Oddship EDWARD F. WYMAN.

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**7. The Pre-Shakespearian Drama.**

By Bro. FRANK IRBON. Delivered at the Freemasons' Tavern, Friday, January 2nd, 1885. (pp. 34.) Presented to the Sette by His Oddship EDWARD F. WYMAN.

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**8. Inaugural Address**

of His Oddship, Brother JAMES ROBERTS BROWN, Sixth President of the Sette of Odd Volumes, delivered at the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen Street, on his taking office on April 17th, 1885, &c. (pp. 56.) Presented to the Sette by His Oddship JAMES ROBERTS BROWN.

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**9. Catalogue of Works of Art**

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**10. Catalogue of Manuscripts and Early-Printed Books**

Exhibited and Described by Bro. B. QUARITCH, the Librarian of the Sette of Odd Volumes, at the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen Street, June 5th, 1885. Presented to the Sette by His Oddship JAMES ROBERTS BROWN.

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**12. Inaugural Address**

of His Oddship, Bro. GEORGE OLULOW, Seventh President of the Sette of Odd Volumes, delivered at the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen Street, on his taking office on April 2nd, 1886, &c. (pp. 64.) Presented to the Sette by His Oddship GEORGE OLULOW. Edition limited to 133 copies.

**13. A Few Notes about Arabs.**

By Bro. CHARLES HOLME, Pilgrim of the Sette of Odd Volumes. Read at a Meeting of the "Sette" at Willis's Rooms, on Friday, May 7th, 1886. (pp. 46.) Presented to the Sette of Odd Volumes by Bro. CHAS. HOLME. Edition limited to 133 copies.

**14. Account of the Great Learned Societies and Associations, and of the Chief Printing Clubs of Great Britain and Ireland.**

Delivered by Bro. BERNARD QUARITCH, Librarian of the Sette of Odd Volumes, at Willis's Rooms, on Tuesday, June 8th, 1886. (pp. 66.) Presented to the Sette by His Oddship GEORGE OLULOW. Edition limited to 255 copies.

**15. Report of a Conversazione**

Given at Willis's Rooms, King Street, St. James's, on Tuesday, June 8th, 1886, by His Oddship Bro. GEORGE OLULOW, President; with a summary of an Address on "LEARNED SOCIETIES AND PRINTING CLUBS," then delivered by Bro. BERNARD QUARITCH, Librarian. By Bro. W. M. THOMPSON, Historiographer. Presented to the Sette by His Oddship GEORGE OLULOW. Edition limited to 255 copies.

**16. Codex Chiromantiae.**

*Appendix B. A DISCOURSE CONCERNING AUTOGRAPHS AND THEIR SIGNIFICATIONS.* Spoken in valediction at Willis's Rooms, on October the 8th, 1886, by Bro. EDWARD HERON-ALLEN. (pp. 45.) Presented to the Sette by His Oddship GEORGE OLULOW. Edition limited to 133 copies.

**17. Inaugural Address**

of His Oddship, ALFRED J. DAVIES, Eighth President of the Sette of Odd Volumes, delivered at Willis's Rooms, on his

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By Bro. J. BRODIE-INNES, Master of the Rolls to the Sette of Odd Volumes, delivered at Willis's Rooms, May 4th, 1888. (pp. 89.) Presented to the Sette by His Oddship T. C. VENABLE.

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## 11. Opusculum 34.

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## 12. The Dominie, or The Mirror of the Century.

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## 13. Königsmarck Avenged, or The Phantom Paper.

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## WORKS DEDICATED TO THE SETTE.

### **The Ancestry of the Violin.**

London, 1882. EDWARD HERON-ALLEN.

### **An Odd Volume for Smokers.**

London, 1889. WALTER HAMILTON.

### **The Blue Friars.**

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### **Quatrains.**

London, 1892. W. WILSON MARTIN.

### **Palaeography.**

Notes upon the History of Writing, and the Medieval Art of Illumination.

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### **The Lay of the Odd Volumes.**

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# VERULAMANIA.

BY

SIR E. SULLIVAN, BART.,

Bookbinder and Secretary of  
Ye Sette of Odd Volumes.

N 42

ALFRED H. HARRIS

87

SIR ALFRED HARRIS

ALFRED HARRIS

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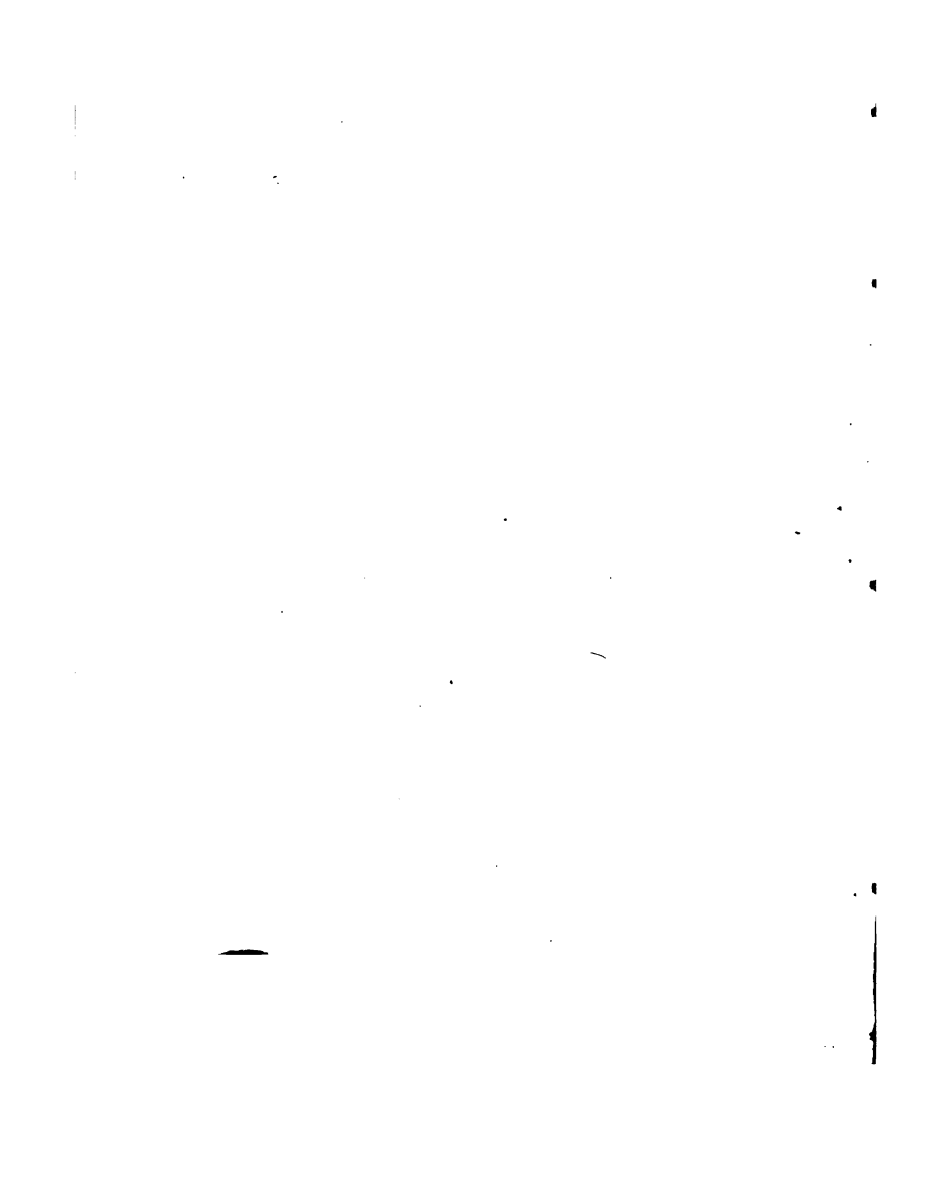
ISSUED TO MEMBERS OF

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**No. XLIX.**

**Verulamania: Some Observations on the  
Making of a Modern Mystery.**





**Herlamania:**  
**Some Observations on the Making**  
**of a Modern Mystery.**

A PAPER READ BEFORE

**Ye Sette of Odd Volumes,**

**October 27th, 1903,**

**Ye laste night on which ye Sette were gathered**  
**in Meetyng attē Limmer's Hotel,**

BY

**SIR EDWARD SULLIVAN, BART.,**

*Bookbinder and Secretary of ye Sette.*



LONDON:

Imprynted at ye Bedford Press, 20 & 21, Bedfordbury, W.C.

MDCCCIV.

17



Sunt quorum ingenium nova tantum crustula promit.

*Horatius.*

**Let this be Printed.**

By Order of the Publication Committee,

CONRAD W. COOKE (*Mechanick*),

Secretary, Publication Committee.

*This Edition is limited to 199 Copies, and  
is imprinted for private circulation only.*

No. *18* .....

**Presented unto**

**BY**

*StB* JUL 22 '40

"HERE THEREFORE IS THE FIRST DISTEMPER  
OF LEARNING, WHEN MEN STUDY WORDS AND  
NOT MATTER."

*Bacon, Ad. of Learning, Bk. I.*



### Verulamania.

ONE of the most amazing literary theories that has ever perplexed, amused, seduced, or amazed students of the works of our greatest dramatist, is that which has been put forward, in comparatively recent times, with the object of showing that William Shakspeare, who for nearly 300 years has been the accepted author of the writings identified with his name, was not in reality the author at all; but that the works which were in ignorance so long ascribed to him can be shown to have been written by his contemporary, Francis Bacon, who, for reasons of a very cogent kind, was under the strange

necessity of allowing another to enjoy the honour attached to the authorship of those marvellous productions.

This astounding doctrine is now half a century old. Into its origin and development it is unnecessary to go, further than to mention that it came to us from America, and that it is now believed in by a very large number of persons, chiefly citizens of the United States.

The Shakspearians, relying on the strength of an old-established position, have been slow to adopt any active measures of defence; and the attacks of the new school were met at first with amused incredulity—later on with ridicule and sneers—but finally with serious argument, logic, and historical facts, founded upon a very exhaustive survey of the literary period in which the rival claimants lived and had their being.

And here at least we have something to be



thankful for, seeing that the Baconian movement, if it has done nothing else, has led a large number of persons to a closer study of the works of Shakspeare, and possibly even of Bacon; as well as of that most interesting period of the literature of our country in which both these writers occupied positions of a very remarkable nature.

Put briefly, the Baconian argument is this—that Shakspeare was the child of illiterate parents, brought up in a bookless neighbourhood; who, while he remained at Stratford, was a poacher, a tippler, and a ne'er-do-weel, and who left his native town under a cloud, and incompletely educated: that on reaching London he was engaged in holding horses at a theatre, where he was afterwards employed as an actor—"an indifferent actor," too, according to Hallam, the historian—that the Plays and Poems which bear the name of Shakspeare teem with knowledge, ancient and

modern, and show an intimacy with law, science, classics, natural history, Court manners, French and Italian languages and customs, altogether beyond the reach of the Stratford youth, and that HE therefore cannot be regarded as the author.

On the other hand—that Francis Bacon was at this very time a paragon of learning, a master of classic lore; personally familiar with the Courts of England and of France; brought up as the son of a Lord Keeper, with all the advantages of a university education; deeply read in the scientific knowledge of his day; immersed in philosophy and natural history; a trained lawyer; an author and a master of English—known to have written some poetry, but, for reasons of his own, reluctant to appear before the world as in any way connected with the stage—and that therefore he, and he only, was the writer of the works which passed as Shakspeare's.

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Furthermore, that Francis Bacon was engaged throughout his life, as can be gathered from certain hints in his writings, on a great work for the purpose of educating mankind ; and that in pursuance of his object, he selected the actor, Shakspeare, as a fitting person to lend him his name as the author of the Plays and Poems, and that he paid this singular representative large sums of money for the accommodation. The argument goes on to tell us that the truth of this (somewhat romantic) story is amply attested by a comparison of the acknowledged writings of Bacon with the Plays and the Poems, which so resemble one another in diction, and in other striking respects, as to leave no doubt upon the mind that the two series of works, though dissimilar in form, are in reality the obvious outcome of a single brain.

Now, touching the education of Shakspeare it is admitted that we have no direct evidence

as to what that education was ; and it will be observed that the absence of any direct evidence on the subject seems tantamount in Baconian minds to something like a proof of no education at all.

Let us grant, then, for the moment, that Shakspeare was the untaught and unpolished rustic he is represented to have been. Is it conceivable that Bacon would have chosen such a substitute? Are we to assume that this Stratford bumpkin only opened his lips when playing a part upon the stage? If not, we know that the silly masquerade of which he is supposed to have been the hero could not, by any possibility, have been maintained for even one day after the publication of the first of the plays that bore the name of William Shakspeare as its author.

In a nutshell, then, the Baconian difficulty here is, that if Shakspeare is made out to have been an uneducated rustic, Bacon is made out

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to have been a fool ; while, if Baconians allow that Shakspeare was quick-witted and sufficiently learned to justify his being picked out as a fitting representative by such a man as Bacon, they at once admit the possibility of his being in reality the author of the works which were publicly attributed to him.

The possibility, I say, for history has shown us, in more instances than one, that a man of humble birth and of deficient education, who happened to be endowed with a great natural gift of poetry, could, long before Shakspeare's time, achieve a position in literature extremely like that which Shakspeare himself attained : and if before Shakspeare's time, why not in Shakspeare's own case ?

Let me give you an example of what I mean.

The famous Roman comedian Plautus, who was born at Sarsina, B.C. 254, came to Rome in needy circumstances, and, like Shakspeare, first

found employment amongst the actors in that city.

Having saved a little money in this employment, he left the capital to set up in business in the country. This business failing, he returned to Rome in a destitute condition, and was employed by a baker to turn a hand-mill. While so engaged he wrote three plays, by the sale of which to the managers of the public games he was enabled to quit his drudgery, educate himself, and begin a literary career. It is hardly necessary to remind a company such as that I am addressing that the literary career of Plautus is that of Rome's greatest playwright; but what I may be forgiven for reminding you of is, that the eminent grammarian Ælius Stilo used to say of him—and Varro adopted his words—"that the Muses would use the language of Plautus if they were to speak Latin." Cicero himself puts his wit on a par with that of the old Attic Comedy; and Lessing, in more

recent days, has pronounced his "Captivi" to be the finest comedy that was ever brought upon the stage. And yet he had no more education than Shakspeare. But the analogy between these two is even more complete, for Aulus Gellius has told us that, of about 130 plays ascribed to Plautus, only about one-fifth of the number came from his pen; the remainder being works by earlier dramatists, which had been revised by him to suit the altered taste of the time. And, for all that, no one has ever suggested that the uneducated baker's boy, Plautus, could not have written what he did.

Another case that might be cited is that of John Bunyan, the uneducated tinker son of a tinker father, who wrote a book that will last as long as the English language has a reader; and wrote it, too—as tradition tells us—in the bookless neighbourhood of Bedford Gaol.

Taylor, the water-poet, might be added to

such a list, as an instance of one who knew nothing of the classics, and boasted of his ignorance ; whose works, for all that, teem with classic allusions—all which goes to show that the Baconians have yet much to learn both of history and of literature, if they are desirous that those who have studied both should pay any marked attention to the curious utterances in which they so commonly indulge.

Now, one of the matters on which the Baconian dwells with much emphasis is the extraordinary knowledge shown by the writer of the Plays. Those best qualified to express an opinion of any value take a different view ; and tell us, what any careful student may easily discover for himself, that there is *no* trace of any profound learning in Shakspeare's works at all. What the poet Dryden has said on the subject conveys in a telling form what has been accepted as the truth by eminent Shakspearian scholars all over the world.



“He wanted not the spectacles of books to read nature.”

We may assume that Shakspeare, when he came to London first, had no such education as he would have had if he had come from the University, and not direct from Stratford. But we do know that he came straight to the theatre; and what better school, in the circumstances, could he by any possibility attend?

Whether he was at first engaged in revising other dramas or not, he was at any rate seeing them acted: and here, with his quick and comprehensive brain, he had an insight into all the forms and usages of society from Court to stable-yard. The actors, who were his companions, played the parts of princes and peasants; of soldiers, philosophers, and statesmen; of cardinals and queens—filling him with a knowledge of just those very details of language, ceremony, and fashion with which he was possibly least acquainted.

His literary colleagues were the writers of these plays. A mind such as Shakspeare's could not have been long in such company without drinking in much of the knowledge that was theirs; and even a casual student of the literature of Elizabethan days knows that the classic spirit, its mythology, its allusions, were the breath of the nostrils of all who at that time took a pen in their hand.

In addition to such opportunities of self-education, we know that Shakspeare availed himself with no sparing hand of the histories and chronicles of the time—and that, too, to such an extent that it may be truly said that there is hardly a single historical fact referred to in all his Plays and Poems which is not to be found in black and white in some other earlier author of the time.

As for knowledge at first hand—the outcome of a scholar's intimacy with the Greek and Latin classics—it is, I fancy, extremely doubtful

if there is any such to be found anywhere in Shakspeare's works. Shakspeare's own sketch in *Cymbeline* of the rapid education of the child Posthumus, taking in, as he puts it, "all the learnings that his time could make him the receiver of" . . . "as we do air, fast as 'twas ministered"; his description in *Henry V.* of the suddenly-acquired knowledge of the young prince; and his picture in the early part of *As You Like It* of Orlando, all seem to suggest, in a marked but modest way, that the writer is in these instances in reality speaking of himself and his own rapid educational advancement.

But is it not a singular fact, bearing on this controversy in the broadest view of it, that no leading authority on Shakspeare's works and life can be named, in any part of the world, who for a moment allows that there is anything in what Baconians contend for? And, singular as this fact is, is it not stranger still that no serious student of Bacon's works has ever even suggested

that Bacon wrote, or could have written, what is commonly attributed to Shakspeare? The most famous of Bacon's biographers, Spedding, goes so far as to say that he doubted if there were "five consecutive lines in either Bacon or Shakspeare that could possibly be interchanged, and not recognised at once by any person familiar with their styles."

But let us come to close quarters with some of the champions of Baconianism. I take two out of their number; and they are two whom all will admit to be deserving of a very careful attention, both of them having held the position of judges in our land, at the time when their contributions to the controversy were compiled, and, as such, presumably high authorities on the value of evidence.

Lord Penzance, who was a Judge of the Court of Probate and Divorce, calls his work "A Judicial Summing-up." It was published

in 1902—after his death—with an introduction by an eminent King's Counsel.

The opening address describes the author as one who had "no previously formed opinion on the subject." The value of this assertion does not, however, impress one that reads a little way into the volume.

The nature of the learned Judge's arguments may be gathered from two somewhat dogmatic statements, which may be taken as samples of all that he has urged in support of Bacon. Endeavouring to show the impossibility of Shakspeare having been an English scholar, he says: "the first English Grammar was not published until 1586, after Shakspeare's education, if such it may be called, was over" . . . . "It is evident that much learning was impossible, for the necessary books did not exist."

I am afraid the right honourable gentleman cannot himself have had access to what he calls "the necessary books" at the time he

penned this remarkable assertion, or he would easily have informed himself that at the date he mentions Lilly's well-known *Grammar* had already gone through many editions; and that Peacham's, and also Sherry's, *Figures of Grammar*—not to mention others—were in existence years before 1586. But having, in this airy way, successfully, as he imagines, cut off young Shakspeare from all knowledge of the grammar of his native tongue, he proceeds to show that *historical* knowledge was equally beyond his reach. Here are his words: "History, the history of his land, had not been compiled in his day." . . . . "The *Chronicles of Holinshed* were, I believe, the most notable of the available sources of historical knowledge open to him."

Such an assertion can only be taken to mean that the learned gentleman who makes it had never heard of Matthew Paris, Froissart, Fabian, Hall, Stow, and Grafton, together

with a host of others that might be named, the whole of whose histories of England were available to anyone in Shakspeare's day who cared to consult them.

Restraint is somewhat difficult in the face of such travesties of argumentative impartiality, and one can hardly be blamed for suggesting in a spirit of charity, that the right honourable Judge who committed himself to *obiter dicta* of so baseless a kind, must have stumbled, at some forgetful moment of his judicial career in the Divorce Court, into pronouncing a decree *nisi* between himself and his own common sense.

The other pro-Baconian work—that by Judge Webb—is of a very different character, and merits much more serious consideration, being as it is the most complete summary of the heretical doctrine which has as yet made its appearance, and one in which all the old arguments and many new ones are put

forward with a brilliancy and versatility which leaves the average uneducated Shakspearian almost dumb. The book is entitled—"The Mystery of William Shakespeare: a Summary of Evidence." Its author was a distinguished scholar; an ex-Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin; and, when he wrote his work, a a County-Court Judge in Ireland. It is an embodiment of Baconianism in all its moods and tenses—always excepting the cipher, at which the author discreetly draws the line.

Having rung the changes on the familiar topics of Shakspeare's defective education and humble surroundings, and reminding us that Lord Palmerston and John Bright were amongst those who refused to accept the Stratford Shakspeare as the author of the Plays, Judge Webb admits that contemporary writers refer to Shakspeare by name, but contends, in the face of these references, that we are without any proof that the Stratford




Shakspeare can be identified with Shakspeare the Poet.

He devotes an important portion of his book to a consideration of Shakspeare as a man of science, as a classical scholar, and as a philosopher ; pointing out with much elaboration the many similarities between Shakspeare and Bacon in the matter of expression language, facts of natural history, and classical allusion, which satisfy him that the Dramatist's and Bacon's works are the offspring of one mind.

But he does not tell us—though it is a fact which has an important bearing on the matter—that there is no single parallel, of all those upon which his argument is founded, that is not to be met with in *other* books which were printed and published before either Shakspeare or Bacon incorporated the substance of it in their works. Nor does he tell us—whether aware of it or not—that the parallels between Ben Jonson and

Bacon are quite as remarkable and as numerous as those between Shakspeare and Bacon. So that if we adopt his argument as proof that Bacon and Shakspeare are one, we must, by the force of this very argument, conclude that Ben Jonson was but another *alias* for the versatile and comprehensive Lord Verulam. Judge Webb's main theory, stripped of its ingenious trappings, comes to this, that there were two Shakspeares : one the Stratford Actor, the other the Poet, who was the *alter ego* of Bacon.

A further point—and one that Judge Webb urges with much insistence and cleverness—is that Ben Jonson was in the secret, and knew of this distinction ; and he sums up his summary of this branch of his contention in these words : “ Not one of the literary men—poets, playwrights, and pamphleteers—of the time can be adduced as attesting the responsibility of the Player for the works which are associated with his name” !



Now, here we have a definite statement of so astounding a kind that it may, not unfairly, be taken as typical of Judge Webb's whole reasoning; and if this can be shown to be unfounded, the main part of his case must go by the board.

It should be borne in mind that Baconians who distinguish between Shakspeare the Actor and Shakspeare the Poet make a further distinction by asserting that the Actor's name is always spelt Shakspere; while the Poet's name invariably appears in the longer form, Shakespeare.

Before endeavouring to answer these argumentative assertions, it should be mentioned that Judge Webb further contends, in a very ingenious way, that Shakspeare's plays, prior to their publication in the First Folio in 1623 (when Shakspeare was dead seven years), had been laboriously revised by Bacon himself—whom he, of course, supposes to have been the

author—that Ben Jonson acted as intermediary for him, and handed the fair copy of the First Folio to Heming and Condell, the players; and that it was Ben Jonson himself who wrote the “Address” which appears at the commencement of the volume, although signed by Heming and Condell, Shakspeare’s fellow-actors in other days. Altogether a very pretty, but unconvincing theory!

Let us look, however, for a moment at what Ben Jonson tells us himself in this very volume. In his well-known eulogy there, he calls Shakspeare “Sweet Swan of Avon”—identifying the man of Stratford with the author and the actor, and in this same eulogy he mourns the author as *dead*, while Bacon was alive; and, more remarkable still, the portrait of the author stares you in the face at the opening page of the volume: a portrait that nobody has ever yet suggested to have been Bacon’s portrait.

The name, too, of the *author* as it appears

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on the title-page, is William Shakespeare; and closely following is a list of "The names of the Principall Actors in all these Playes," the very first in this list being the name of William Shakespeare, spelt in identically the same way as the author's name is spelt upon the title. In other words, the greatest opportunity which the conspirators had of emphasizing the distinction in the spelling of the name is here neglected; and one can only say of the Baconian theory in this connection, that a clumsier conspiracy, and a shallower fraud, was never hatched outside the precincts of what corresponded to a lunatic asylum in the days of James I.

But Jonson's references to Shakspeare are not exhausted in what he has written in the First Folio. We know that in his other writings he has criticised Shakspeare more freely than any others of whom he makes mention. He was for some time extremely jealous of

ample proof of his genius and great abilities in the forty-eight plays he has left behind him."

Chettle, a publisher of the day, tells us in 1592 that Shakspeare was "excellent in the qualitie he professes;" and it should be noted that the word "qualitie" was at the time the recognised term for describing the *actor's* calling. "Divers of worship," Chettle goes on, "have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty and his facetious grace in writing that approves his art." Here, again, you have the actor and the writer absolutely identified.

Francis Meres, a learned graduate of Cambridge, in 1598, gives us an exhaustive review of contemporary literary efforts, and Shakspeare figures here as the greatest man of letters of the day. He besides mentions no less than six of his Comedies, and an equal number of his Tragedies, by name: his *Venus and Adonis*,

*Lucrece*, and "his Sugred Sonnets among his private friends."

Then we have the fact that the first edition of *Venus and Adonis* was printed by Richard Field, a fellow-townsman of Shakspeare, and his name appears upon the title-page of this early work of the Poet.

Is not this evidence more than sufficient to outweigh the somewhat hasty assertion that "not one of the literary men of his time attests the responsibility of the Player for the works which are associated with his name"?

But there is, besides this, another somewhat weighty argument against Baconianism in connection with the matter of contemporary reference to Shakspeare and his work. We find, as a matter of incontrovertible fact, that no single voice was raised during the lifetime of Shakspeare or in the period closely following his death, to suggest that he had shown any traces of learning inconsistent with his origin

or his education, such as they were. Do we to-day—does even the youngest Baconian amongst us—know more of the man Shakspeare than his many associates in the times when he lived and worked amongst them? His Plays were published with his name attached; it was the same with his Poëms and Sonnets. These works he claimed as his creations in the only way that authorship has been claimed from his day down to our own time, yet never a syllable has reached us through record or tradition questioning the authenticity of his writings. No “butcher-boy” theories as to his early life suggested to those who loved him, “man and boy,” the inconsistencies on which the inspired pedants of our days have reared a transparent superstructure of literary impossibility. Perhaps his colleagues—shrewd folk as they were—listening as they did to the rich word-music that echoed round them in the golden age of English poetry, knew that genius is not an



artificial or a hothouse plant ; that the poet is not made but born ; remembering, as they seem to have done, that even before their day, many who were humbly bred and poorly taught had sung themselves into immortality, while students and philosophers, and men of learning, were still groping for name and fame, destined never to emerge from the swaddling-clothes of littleness and pedantry. Let Baconians supply us with an intelligible answer to this difficulty, and I shall at once admit that they have made a step towards dethroning Shakspeare from the place he occupied in the eyes of his own contemporaries, and the place he has continued to occupy ever since in the opinions of all men who have ever gained a reputation as impartial and careful students of his life, his work, and his surroundings.

Amongst other things which we are asked by Baconians to believe is that Bacon, in fulfilment

of some mysterious mission for the enlightenment of humanity, adopted the drama as the surest means of appealing to the senses of his hearers ; and much stress is laid on the fact that he was from time to time associated with the production of a goodly number of masques, semi-theatrical in their nature, showing that he possessed a certain knowledge of stage-craft. His writings, too, we are told, contain scattered intimations that he was privately engaged upon work of a poetical kind ; and Dr. Webb reminds us that in 1594 he writes to Essex, saying that he is "drinking the waters of Parnassus"; that in 1603 he solicits the assistance of Davis, and desires him "to be good to concealed poets"; and that in 1604 he states to Devonshire that, though he did not "profess to be a poet," he had upon occasion indited a sonnet to the Queen. Upon this rickety foundation, propped up by some concrete blocks compounded of imagination and dis-

tortion, we are asked to raise the exquisite fabric of Shakspeare's plays.

Surely, in such a case, Bacon's own views in relation to theatrical matters are more to be relied on than those put forward by the advocates of the new gospel; although Baconians, so far as I am aware, have not gone out of their way to tell us what Bacon's opinions were upon the subject. The sum and substance of them is, that he at all times regarded stage representations as "impostures" and "fictions," "whereby," as he puts it, "men in masses, like the vast audience of a theatre, allow themselves to be swayed." And in full agreement with such views we have the remarkable fact that nowhere in the whole range of his works does Bacon ever quote a passage from any contemporary writer, nor even a single line from any English poet of any age. Besides, there is not a trace of genuine humour in any of his writings.

Then, again, we know from Bacon himself that he did not believe that books written in English would ever reach posterity. He rested his fame upon his Latin writings. "English books," he tells us, "are not citizens of the world." "These modern languages will at one time or other play the bankrupts with books."

His chief anxiety in 1623, when nearing the end of his life, was to have his writings translated into Latin; and, strange as it may appear, he never seems to have been aware of his own powers as a writer of English.

To ask us to believe that a man seriously and consistently holding such views—despising the "impostures" of the theatre, as he calls them—and professing a settled conviction that English-written books were doomed to speedy extinction, should have selected a **DRAMATIC** form and an **ENGLISH** garb for the great lesson he was preaching to unborn generations—is, it seems to me, to strain one's power

of belief to breaking-point, and to supply us with an argument in favour of the Shaksperian authorship which no Baconian ingenuity can ever successfully get over.

But let us go a little deeper into Bacon's life—his philosophy and his surroundings. He has been described, as we are all aware, as the pioneer of Experimental Philosophy, the protagonist in the revolt against the Aristotelian despotism, which was backed by the schoolmen and the Church.

Recent lives of Bacon, however, have brought out into clearer light the fact that the rôle of leader in such a movement is not one that was rightly his. Efforts such as Bacon's had been made long before his time. "He had entered," as one of his ablest biographers puts it, "into the fruits of the labours of many predecessors." His great namesake, Roger Bacon, had fought the same fight in the thirteenth century; and, omitting

many others, even Leonardo da Vinci anticipated the main features of his experimental philosophy.

It is both curious and instructive to find that those who are now *best* qualified to pronounce a judgment on his achievements in this direction are very far from arriving at any general consent as to what his philosophic system really was.

On this system, whatever it was, he was engaged in all his spare time throughout a busy life. The *Advancement of Learning*, in English, came out in 1605, and fifteen years later he gave the world a Latin volume containing the prospectus of his *Instauratio Magna*, followed by the *Aphorisms*—and this was ALL that was ever completed of the *Novum Organum*, the “New Instrument” by which human reason was to obtain supremacy over nature; and the work, imperfect as it stands, is but a *rechauffée* of earlier writings. We

cannot even regard it as an up-to-date summary of previous knowledge ; for whether the cause were carelessness, or the jealousy of an overweening egotism, the fact remains that Bacon, contemporary though he was of Galileo, Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Gilbert, and Napier, was, so far as we can gather from his own writings, absolutely ignorant of these notable men of science and their brilliant contributions to the knowledge of the day.

His *Thema Coeli* contains his own provisional theory of astronomy, but the work is chiefly remarkable for its neglect of then recent astronomical discoveries.

Is it any wonder that his contemporary, Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, should tell us that Bacon wrote astronomy like a Solicitor-General ?

A like assertion could be made about him in reference to his first treatise on heat : for though written long after the discovery of the

principle of the thermometer, he does not so much as allude to this most important scientific revelation.

Unpleasant though such reminders may be to those who think Bacon worthy to occupy a very prominent niche as a philosopher in the Temple of Fame, and who are urgent, moreover, to press his claim to fill no less a place than that which Shakspeare holds in our English Walhalla, it is not reasonable that any impartial mind should be appealed to on the hearing of such a claim, without being fully informed of the real character and pretensions of the claimant.

Little information is supplied to us by Baconians on the subject. All their writings, so far as I have read them, quietly take for granted the surpassing abilities, the unrivalled knowledge, the mighty intellect, the tact and the culture, of the philosopher, the English scholar, the lawyer, the statesman, and the student, that they have somewhat hastily assumed their paragon Bacon to have been.



No other mind but his, forsooth, could have conceived the works so long known as Shakspeare's. And this, it seems to me, is one of the most striking weaknesses of their contention ; for it is becoming more obvious every day that Bacon's position, whether as a man of learning, a student of philosophy or a master of English, is one which has long been much exaggerated.

I have touched on his deficiencies as a professor of science ; but let us consider him for a few moments as *a man*, and ask ourselves if, independently of all other considerations, the man he was could ever have been capable of producing the Shakspearian plays and poems.

An unpleasant surprise awaits anyone who bases his answer to such a question on the study of Bacon's life and letters. There are few, I believe, who will read his autobiography, as contained in his own voluminous letters and private notes, together with a history of his

time, who will hesitate to pronounce him to have been a brilliant hypocrite, a base and cold-blooded friend, a rancorous and merciless enemy, a mean and cringing place-hunter, an amateur philosopher, a shallow man of science ; one who, as a statesman and professional man, was destitute of virtue, tact and foresight ; and who, with all his great natural gifts of intellect, coupled with an irresistible charm of personal attraction, shunned neither treachery, untruth, baseness nor blasphemy, in his never-ending struggle for his own advancement.

To assert that his faults were the faults of his age is impossible, for the history of his time has no instance of brilliancy and meanness combined in so repulsive a form.

According to Baconians, he must have been possessed of tact and foresight to an extraordinary degree, in planning and preserving his incognito as author of the plays and poems that appeared under another's name.

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But has he anywhere in real life shown that he was master of such caution and reserve, even in cases where his own interests were at stake ? History answers : "Most emphatically not." One of his earliest speeches in the House of Commons—the subsidy speech in 1593—enraged Elizabeth against him, and brought on him the penalty of exclusion from the royal presence ; and he never held office while Elizabeth remained on the throne. A little foresight and circumspection—qualities which were never his—would here, perhaps, have changed his whole career.

Again, when James was King, his want of tact in reference to the marriage of Buckingham's brother to the daughter of Coke, drove both the King and the Favourite wild with indignation ; and it was only after a grovelling submission that Bacon was restored to favour. Once more, in 1620, he showed his blindness to both public opinion and to his personal interests in urging

the assembling of the very Parliament that was destined to bring about his downfall. Such was the man who, to avoid contamination by the stage in his striving after place and power, played through his life the silly fraud of pretending that he was NOT the author of *Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *As You Like It*!

The advocates who maintain this untenable theory have forgotten that there was, amongst Bacon's own contemporaries, one William Alexander, a Scotch poet, who was also a playwright. Perhaps it was inconvenient to remember that he was the writer of four tragedies—*Darius*, *Croesus*, *The Alexandraean*, and *Julius Caesar*—one of which was even dedicated to the King; and so far was he from suffering any injury by reason of his writing plays, that he was afterwards appointed Secretary of State for Scotland, and was raised subsequently to the peerage under the title of the Earl of Stirling.

But to return to Bacon's life. Here is a brief

chronicle of his deviations from honourable conduct, where no fact can be disputed :—

1. His treatment of Essex, the friend and helper who, in his time of trouble, had given him a vast estate, was cold-blooded, ungenerous, and ungrateful.

2. In Cecil's case, he had indulged in gross and persistent flattery up to the day of his patron's death ; and this was followed by censorious criticism—almost before that patron could be laid in his grave—and then by fervent congratulations to the King, upon the goodness of God in delivering him from a pestilent counsellor.

3. His behaviour to Trott, a long-suffering and friendly creditor, was selfish and unreasonable.

4. His rancour towards his enemy, Coke, was never-ending throughout his professional life.

5. He showed an utter want of moral dis-

crimination in the language he used at the trial of Lord Sanquhar.

6. His ingratitude to his friend, Yelverton, was cruel and unjustifiable.

7. His submission to Buckingham, even where he professed himself to be in the right, and represented the Favourite as being in the wrong, was servile and degrading—how servile and how degrading, may be gathered from his own words to Buckingham—"Christ had his John, and I have my George."

8. His constant efforts to lower the reputation of the Attorney-General, Hobart, were contemptible and mean.

9. His advice to the King to delude Somerset, when on his trial, by promises never intended to be kept, exhibit a treacherous disregard for morality which would be difficult to parallel.

Yet, as Dr. Abbott, one of his most recent biographers, tells us, all these base acts were

done deliberately, and set down on paper before he did them ! And still he describes himself as "born for the service of mankind."

Long as is this record of infamy, it contains no mention of any act of judicial corruption on Bacon's part. And yet we know that, sooner than meet the charges of this kind which were brought against him, he pleaded guilty to the whole.

Is it humanly conceivable that the author of these deeds was the author also of Shakspeare's Plays and Poems ?

If more be wanted by way of proof to show that Bacon never wrote anything but what has come down to us as his own, take at haphazard from Shakspeare's works one or two word-pictures drawn by the master-hand, and put beside them the choicest gems you can extract from Bacon's laboured "Essays" or his "Advancement"; and the gulf that divides the artist that is born from the artist that is

made will spread broad and unbridgeable before you.

On Shakspeare's side—all that language has of power, of richness and of beauty—the majesty of pathos ; the anger that appals ; the gentleness that never fails to woo and win ; the remorse that tears the fibres of men's hearts ; mercy and self-sacrifice, perfect beyond man's craft to paint them in their comeliest form. Love such as never poet dreamed of before or since ; the despair of storm-vexed, homeless Lear. Revenge and madness, lurid in a depth of colouring that time can never dim—and, over all, the humour that laughs and leaps from scene to scene, bubbling in rushing currents from an untutored and immortal pen.

On Bacon's side—the stilted utterances of the pedant, the philosopher, and the placeman ; into whose life and writings came never a thought but of himself and his own preferment ;



where humour never sheds a transient ray to lighten the accurate solidity of his painful researches into the works of those that went before him ; where passion never stirs a reader to pity, to anger, or to tears ; where, even in his most polished periods, the dull and clouding spirit of the schoolmaster is for ever breaking through the splendours of his most brilliant phraseology ; and where, after labouring through all his writings, one lays the last of his many tomes aside, only to ask : Would English letters occupy any lower rank in the eyes of the world, if Bacon's works and Bacon's life were for ever blotted out from the records and the recollection of mankind ?

Can one, in the circumstances, reasonably be blamed for assailing the Baconian methods of argumentation ? THEY, remember, are the aggressors ; and THEY have not hesitated to drag down, so far as in them lay, the fair fame of England's Greatest Poet.

Lord Penzance, forsooth, from his judgment-seat, is to be allowed to indulge an ignorant and ill-timed humour at the Poet's expense, and call Shakspeare "a clown." Dr. Platt, a leader of Baconian eccentricity in the United States, is to assert with confidence that Shakspeare of Stratford was an "illiterate person," and "of questionable honesty": and the Shakspearian is to listen unmoved and silent in the face of ignorance conveyed in such insulting terms. I, for one, protest against the methods of this revolutionary and truculent school, whose ultimate arguments are based on something which, if it be not deception, is something so near akin to it that even that prince of Macchiavellian self-deceivers, Bacon himself, would find it a task beyond his powers to convince a rational mind that it was not deception, of an exceptionally ugly and utterly futile type. And what was the end and aim of the conspiracy which involved printers, publishers, actors,

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peers, and poets in its meshes? To shield a disgraced and self-confessed offender against the law from the anticipated censure of a King who had shown himself to be a liberal patron of the stage; and at a time when Bacon's career as a public man was all but closed; when the restoration to royal favour of the grovelling politician, who held himself forth to the world as the preacher of Man's dominion over Nature, was no more than the shadow of a dream. Here, if you like, is a mystery, although not quite "The Mystery of William Shakespeare."

Whatever mystery there be, it is in my view an imported one, manipulated into flimsy existence by a series of misconceptions in a region where special pleading is exalted into demonstration, and common sense is rigorously and systematically driven out of doors. And thus it is that the Baconian, to solve a mystery of his own creation, presents us with an explanation which is ten times more mysterious still;

forgetting that a rational, educated, and logical mind will never, in such circumstances, accept as satisfactory any solution which so bristles with improbability, inconsequence, and deception, as to leave the original problem absolutely devoid of difficulty when compared with the insurmountable obstacles with which the solution is itself beset.

#### **POST SCRIPTUM.**

A summary of the widely-divergent views of Baconians would be incomplete without some mention of the most advanced school which is to be found amongst them. The erudite of this section, while relying to the full on such Baconian arguments as I have already mentioned, go considerably further, and confidently maintain that Francis Bacon was in his day the head of the Rosicrucian Society—a brotherhood, they tell us, whose ramifications extended through all Europe, and who had an

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absolute control over the printing-presses which were then at work in the civilised world. Bacon, as their autocrat, issued his secret orders as to the publication and printing of his works, and the subservient Rosicrucian printers, at his bidding, introduced ciphers, allegorical pictures, misplaced illustrations, and erroneous pagination in the books that were issued from their presses, in such forms that the ordinary reader should see nothing strange or worthy of special notice; but that all who were members of the mystic brotherhood might read, as in the clear light of day, the message to the faithful which was latent in the textual vagaries which were introduced at the suggestions of their chief.

Interpreting these cryptogrammic symbols according to the Rosicrucian code, the initiated are informed that Bacon was the son of Queen Elizabeth by a secret marriage with Leicester, and that he wrote all Shakspeare's works, all

Spenser's, all Marlowe's, all Ben Jonson's,—in fact, all that was best in English literature at the time—that Montaigne's "Essays" were merely a translation into French of a work written originally in English by Bacon—easily recognised by his youthful style—and that "Don Quixote" was another of his *Opuscula*, which was turned into Spanish by a nobody named Cervantes, who was in the pay of the holy brotherhood of the Rosy Cross.

To combat such laughable heresies must remain the task of someone else. For myself, I think it is a pity to disturb the serenity of so original and illusive a dream ; and I leave these more advanced Baconians in the arms of their Rosicrucian Morpheus, merely remarking that such self-deceivers will be found, on an examination of their writings, to be mainly persons who have the most superficial knowledge of Elizabethan literature, and the faintest insight into the literary questions about

which they talk and write with all the airy assurance of irresponsibility.

It is hardly necessary to say that the only evidence of this extraordinary story is to be found in a cipher which Baconians alone can read. It is therefore not unimportant to remember that in another case, where it is acknowledged all round that Bacon *did* make use of a cipher, he tells us something which no one yet has been found to believe: "I was the justest judge for fifty years." So that even if the Rosicrucian cipher were a reality, it is still very far from proving the truth of the statements which can be extracted from it.

It should, besides, be borne in mind that if Bacon ever concocted any cipher-message for posterity, he would not have written it in English but in Latin—the only language, as he himself tells us, that was likely to reach the persons to whom his message was intended to be conveyed.



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AN ESSAY IN  
SEARCH OF A SUBJECT

BY  
JOHN TODHUNTER

*Playwright to the Sette*

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PRIVATELY PRINTED OPUSCULA ISSUED TO  
MEMBERS OF THE SETTE OF ODD VOLUMES—L

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AN ESSAY IN  
SEARCH OF A SUBJECT



# An Essay in Search of a Subject

*Written by command of His Oddship BROTHER  
SILVANUS THOMPSON Magnetiser and  
read before "The Sette of Odd  
Volumes" May 31st 1904*

BY

JOHN TODHUNTER  
Playwright to the Sette



Presented to the Sette by  
BROTHER JOHN LANE Bibliographert  
At the 255th Meeting  
Tuesday October 25th 1904

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DEDICATED TO  
THE SHADE OF CHARLES LAMB

STB JUL 22 '40



## QUATRAINS

From the Menu of May 31st 1904

### TO LAWRENCE STERNE

*Not where the wine-cup foams, and riot swells  
'Midst world-worn Beauty's evanescent spells,  
Seek we the Master of that style so rare,  
Whose every page a simple story tells.*

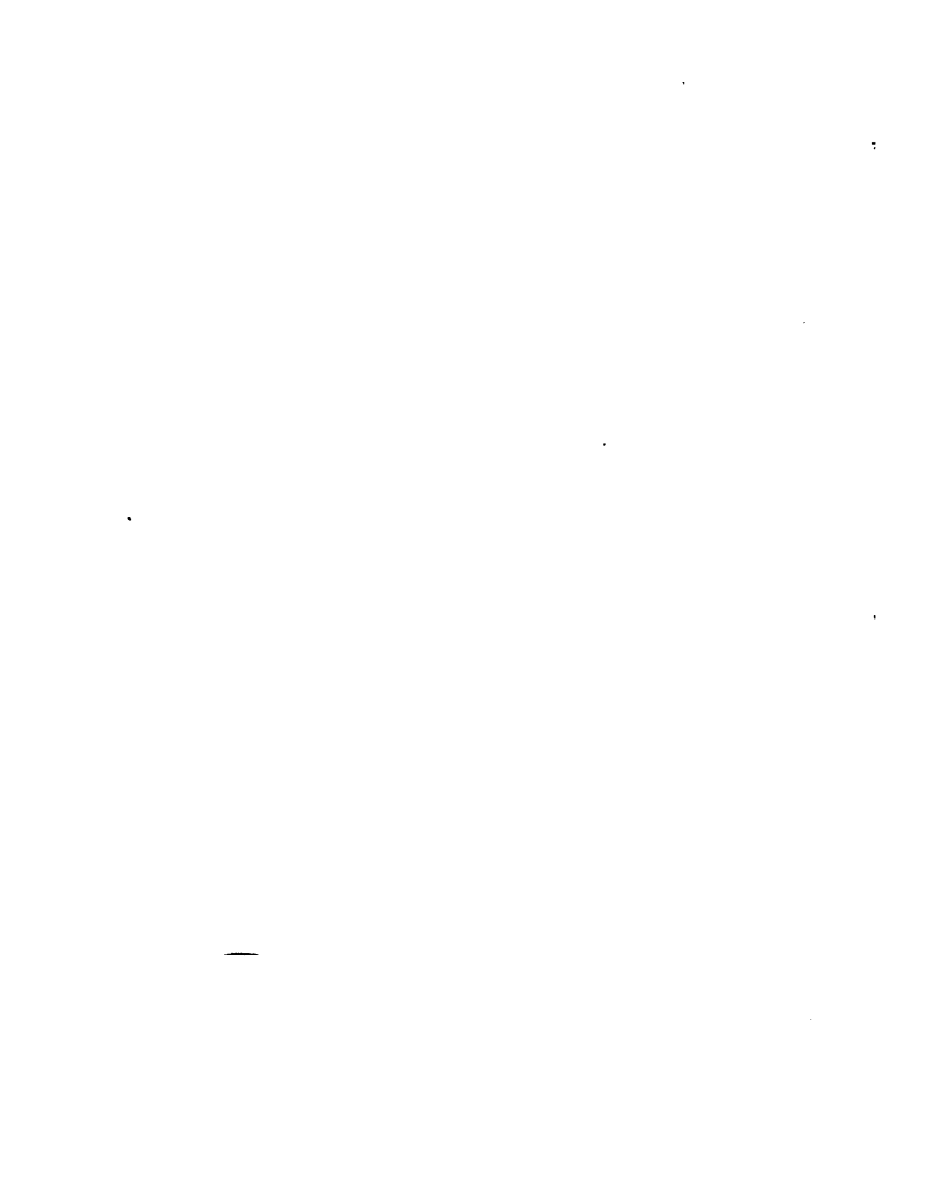
*Stern in naught else but name—calm, genial, free;  
Though homely grace alone commends thee,  
Yet shall thy "Tristram" and "poor Yorick" wear  
The fadeless bays of immortality.*

E. S.

### TO STERNE. A QUATRAIN

*Sterne! We who read thy books with no stern face,  
And leave to bores and prigs the condemnation  
Of Sterne's own snuff and Sterne's own sternutation,  
Through flebile tracts, Thee! demure Satyr, chase.*

The Dominie



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*No. 148*

*Presented unto*

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*by*

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*Imprimatur*

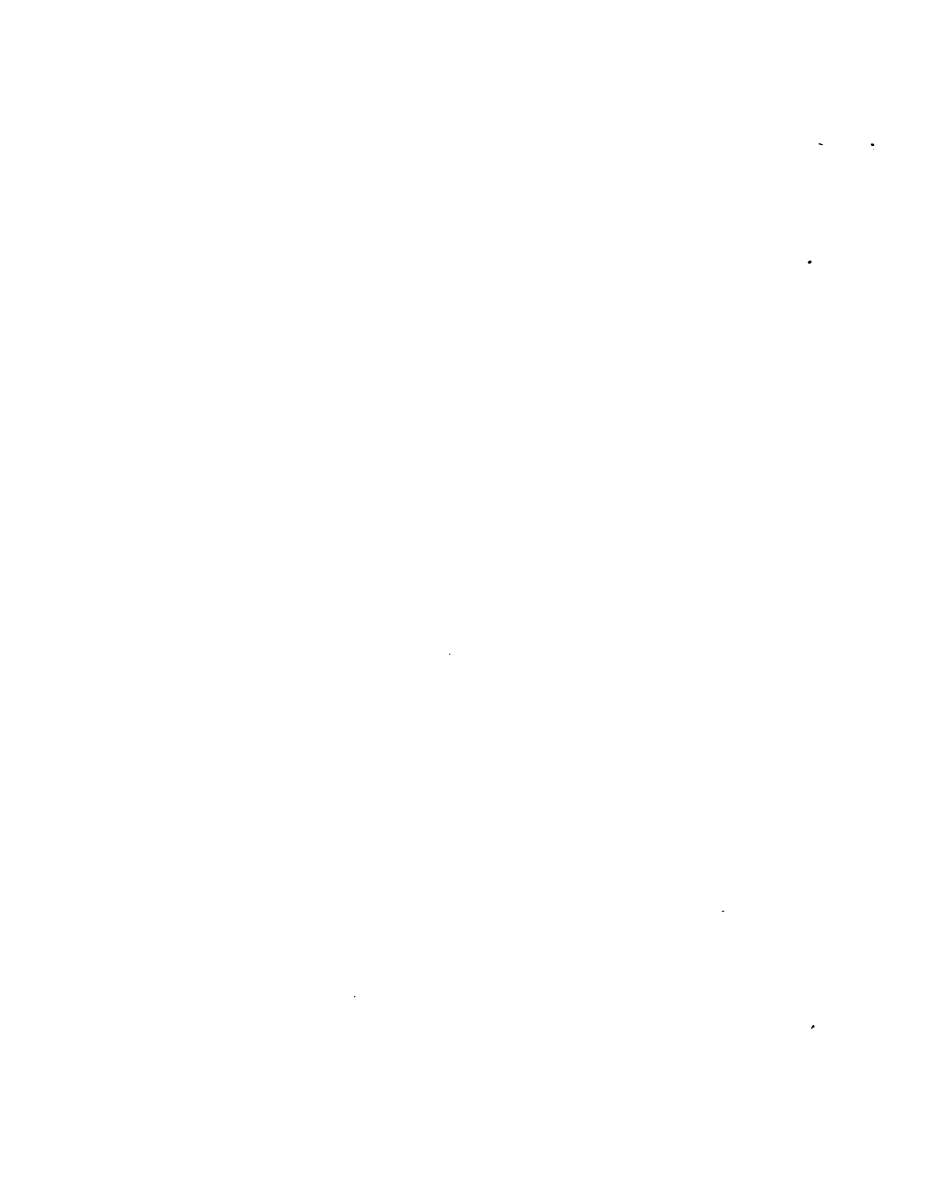
*For and on behalf of the Publication  
Committee of "The Sette of Odd  
Volumes"*

*(Signed)* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*(Date)* \_\_\_\_\_





AN ESSAY IN  
SEARCH OF A SUBJECT

**T**HERE is much pensive pleasure to be got in sitting upon a stile in some country lane ; where you can see, or imagine, that before you there are branching ways, alternative invitations to your feet to wander through field or wood, in places as yet unexplored. Wherefore, when His Oddship laid his commands on me to provide some odd trifle for the entertainment of the Brethren and their

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Guests this evening, being a lazy man with a desultory sense of duty, that was just what I did: I sauntered forth, and sat upon a stile—in Dreamland.

I sat there and mused, idly wondering what path would presently entice me further. Many subjects, I knew, were gambolling somewhere before me, just out of sight, like so many hares; each capable of furnishing material for a *hors d'œuvre* in the Feast of Reason. But the practical words of Mrs. Glass came into my head, troubling my pleasant reverie: I must first *catch* one.

Just then Charles Lamb happened to come by; and with the grave matter-of-fact air of your confirmed punster, stuttered out the preposterous question: "Is—is that your own stile you are sitting on—or—a Hobby Horse?"

Was ever man since the creation of the world interrupted in the getting of an idea by a question so absurd? He



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might as well have asked, like Mistress Shandy, whether I had not *forgot to wind up the clock!* Now I trust I have not such an irritable intellect as possessed that philosophic faddist, Mr. Shandy; whom, as you know, the very suspicion of a pun stung like a gadfly. I can take a pun in a friendly way, as I can take a pinch of snuff. Yet I confess this dismal ghost of a pun amazed me with its thin echoes of that robust and audacious one flung by the genial Humourist no less suddenly at the head of the dumb-founded porter who carried a hare: "Is that your own hare—or a wig?"

Yet on reflexion I found that this whimsy of his was kindly meant. It was a device to set me going—to wind up my brain-clock, which in my indolence I had almost let run down. As the wheels went round I saw that the point of his lean joke was its very suggestion of that other immortal audacity

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of his. He had started a hare for me, kindled in me the joy of the chase, set my wits coursing after a *Subject*.

But what *was* the subject they were in chase of? For it seemed that more than one had got up. Was it the Philosophy of Puns? Whither might not such a subject lead me—to vanish at last, leaving me on the brink of some awful metaphysical abyss? For puns are a sort of mad playing upon words; and a madman's reason, driven like a tennis-ball from word to word in the sport of some insane logic, often sees a portentous significance in a pun. Hamlet was a recondite punster; and what was the end of his philosophising?

Yet a pun may be made the most pungent medium for the conveyance of a truth; as in that splendid repartee of the Corsican Lady to Napoleon, who, when reminded by her that he had broken his promise to a kinsman of hers

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who had done him a service, said brutally :  
"The Corsicans are all a pack of liars."  
Her reply was: "*Non tutti*, Sire; ma  
*Buona Parte*."

That was giving him the pun direct; but there are many varieties. Here is a sample of the pun subtle, or by implication. William IV., walking unattended through the streets of Brighton, saw an acquaintance on the other side of the way, and in jovial sailor-fashion accosted him thus: "Ha, Hudson! Is that you? They tell me you are the biggest blackguard in Brighton." "I hope," said Hudson, "Your Majesty has not come here to deprive me of my character."

There is also the pun innocent, or unconscious. An English Barrister, with a tendency to drop his H's, had to examine an Irishwoman, who kept a lodging-house in a slum of Melbourne, in which there had been a difficulty

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between the Irish and the Chinamen.

"Your name is Mrs. Dineen?"

"Yes, sir, that's my name, so it is—  
an' I've no call to be ashamed of it."

"You keep a lodging-house for Chinamen, I think?"

"Yes, sir. Sure a poor lone woman must do *somethin'* for to get an honest penny."

"Well now, Mrs. Dineen, may I ask you: Is it true that the Chinamen 'ate the Irish?"

"Is it *ate* them sir? Aw *no* sir! I never seen wan 'o them offer t' ate an Irishman, as long as I'm in the place. Sure the sorra ha'porth them poor craythurs does ate, on'y a little bit o' rice."

But enough of puns, for a second subject crosses the trail. That pun of Lamb's about the hare was more than a pun, it was an Audacity of Genius.

The Audacities of Genius—what a

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run may not that subject give the indolent Essayist in search of one! I am not now chiefly thinking of your great men of action; your Nelson who, finding his ship dismasted and in danger of being blown out of the water, gets out of the scrape by laying himself alongside of his two big adversaries, and taking them by the board; your Nicholson, who, in the early days of the Indian Mutiny, when the *prestige* of England,

*"Like a clipt guinea trembled in the scale,"*

calmly receives the Indian Magnate come to his *Darbar* with shoes insolently on his feet; but sends him away with those shoes humbly in his hand. If it were not for such audacities of genius, leaping out on the spur of the moment, where would England be? It is not every nation that has learnt, like

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our Japanese friends, to subordinate audacity to forethought. But:

*"Peace hath her victories  
No less renowned than war,"*

and even in the domain of literature a well-wielded audacity may secure a permanent victory, as even mere bluff a temporary one. Is there not a fine audacity in those Odd Volumes of a certain mad Parson, with a face like that of a Faun, kidnapped from his native woods and clapt into the enchanted prison of a cassock—that Parson who called himself Yorick, and adopted Hamlet's words as his epitaph?

But he had audacious fellows for his forbears. Is not genius itself an audacity of temperament, imagination, personality—what you will? . . . And please observe that when, in the course of this my Essay, I ask myself a question, it is a sign that I have heard the rustling

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of a subject, or seen one stealing away.

For Sterne himself, if I were to take *him* for a hare, and yelp after him like a beagle, I might find my critical muzzle tackled by a hedgehog.

There is audacity enough, and genius enough, in those "Lesser and Greater Testaments" of François Villon, perhaps the greatest of the lyrical poets of France, of whom Théodore de Banville has said:

*"Entre les fous aïeux de Rabelais  
Vous en pouviez, je crois choisir un pire."*

What a gift of song was given to this scapegrace gallows-bird, born in the very year, 1431, in which, as he says in his "Ballad of Old Time Ladies":

*"Joan the maid,  
The good Lorrainer, the English bare  
Captive to Rouen and burnt her there."*

What a splendid genius this man had,

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what vivid power of presentment, what satiric humour, what ribald cynicism, what wit, what pathos, what a robust, yet delicately-handled style—in which, however coarse be the subject he treats, there is yet an aroma of gentle breeding! And what strange suggestions there are in his work of religious feeling, springing up from some hidden deep in his soul, as in that Ballade given to his Mother, “wherewithal to do her Homage to our Lady”! Here are a couple of stanzas of it, in John Payne’s excellent translation.

*Lady of Heaven, Regent of the earth,  
Empress of all the marish-pools of Hell,  
Receive me, Thy poor Christian, nothing  
worth,  
In the fair midst of Thine elect to dwell:  
Albeit my lack of grace I know full well;  
For that Thy grace, my Lady and my  
Queen,*



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*Aboundeth more than all my sins, I ween,  
Withouten which no soul of all that sigh  
May merit Heaven. So God may make  
me clean,  
In this belief I will to live and die.*

*Say to thy Son I am His—that by his birth  
And death my sins may be redeemable,—  
As Mary of Egypt's dole was turned to  
mirth,  
And eke Theophilus', of whom men tell  
He was by Thee absolved, albeit to Hell  
The poor clerk's soul had long contracted  
been.*

*Assoilzie me, that I may have no teen,  
Maid, that without breach of virginitie  
Didst bear our Lord that in the Host is  
seen.  
In this belief I will to live and die.*

Possibly in the lines about "the poor clerk" Theophilus there may be an indirect allusion to himself. Villon was

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the Morning Star of the early French Renaissance, and its unregulated forces found a voice in him.

Rabelais veiled his audacity under the hood of the charlatan who exposes his strange wares in the market-place; for genius itself will sometimes stoop to revel it in what seems sheer charlatanry, as does this satirist of abuses in Church and State, with his *gros rire* of coarse rollicking humour; so different from the refined mockery of Voltaire.

Man, the laughing animal, laughs in many different keys; and the laughter of the humourist keeps a memory of the tears in which it has been baptized. There is something pathetic surely in the grinning of mankind over a filthy joke, and in Rabelais this pathos assumes as gigantic proportions as the tears of Gargantua. The *cloaca maxima* of human nature seems to discharge itself into the river of his eloquence.

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"Exuberance is beauty" was one of Blake's aphorisms; but the full-blooded extravagance of language in which Rabelais clothes his ideas, exhausting the dictionary of its dunghill terms to furnish the hotbed wherein his flowers of rhetoric so rankly flourish, is often too robustious to be beautiful. His luxuriance astonishes more than it delights; and it tends to induce weariness. Only the broad smile of self-confident good humour, and the genial zest, with which this Silenus of Satirists welcomes you to his Gargantuan feast makes its coarse profusion tolerable. But after all you can cut and come again; there is Attic salt to season it withal, and flasks of curious vintage wherewith to wash it down.

In his handling of things obscene Swift is at the opposite pole from Rabelais. He does not revel in boisterous horse-play merely for the amusement of

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himself and his reader. His *sæva indignatio* against the Yahoo, man—his very hatred of the filth wherein he wallows, made him peer into the dark cavern of man's lower nature with a loathing fascination; sometimes scavenging its contents, and flinging them in his face in a cynical rage. He had always before him the flaw in his own brain, lurking there to extinguish his genius at last. That picture of the tree dying at the top was always in an inner chamber of his imagination, and he plunged into the battle of politics that he might forget his weakness by proving his masterful power over men.

From Rabelais our later humourist, Sterne, stole certain mountebank tricks, as from his contemporary, Rousseau, a note of sentimental tenderness, to be transfigured in that rare and fluent style of his, so delicate in its fantastic charm and wilfulness. Like Shakespeare, he

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had made Montaigne's acquaintance; and his wide knowledge of old authors recalls the wealth of that treasure-house of learning "The Anatomy of Melancholy." But his Book of books was "Don Quixote," and in the intimate relationship between Captain Shandy and Corporal Trim we are reminded of that between the gentle Knight of La Mancha and his faithful squire Sancho Panza.

What a bore would this Parson Yorick be, with his erratic narrative, if it were not so interesting! And what roguish devices he has to secure his reader's attention! What a book is that "Triftram Shandy" of his, in which he ambles and skips about upon his own Hobby-Horse—much as the Knight upon the chess-board proceeds by oblique motion, with that curious potency of leaping sideways or backwards. Like him Sterne can manage to light upon every square of the board by dexterous play.

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Here is a book for the leisurely reader, who is not altogether incapable of thinking, to stray in and meditate upon; like many of those old-world books which can get over the road slowly, without being therefore tedious. But what reader, save an odd one, has leisure for such books now-a-days? In these hurrying times when life speeds by us like a series of dissolving views, caught in snap-shot impressions, we bolt the stories with which Mudie so copiously supplies us, and skip the author's pet passages—and we often forget the book that has given us a couple of hours' distraction. But Sterne's daintily sketched characters, appearing and disappearing in the whimsical mazes of his narrative, haunt our memory and live in our imagination. By what magic is this effected?

So far I had got in my chase of a subject when a Ukase from His Oddship, aimed with the accuracy of a Japanese

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shell, burst upon me. Its object was to drive me from my position, and compel me to produce a scientific treatise on "Trifram Shandy"—on pain of death. The terror of it was enough to dissipate all those animal spirits that should go hand in hand with the Homunculus, which was in the act of begetting an Essay. Here was a subject evasive enough to keep me in chase of it for a year. Why a page or two of that astounding book would have supplied me with matter enough for a whole Odd Volume session! I should have given up the ghost, or at least the chase, had I not known that in a single incident and its treatment the very spirit of the whole might be discerned by the judicious reader. I therefore opened the first volume, and took the Virgilian Lot it gave me.

I happened upon the very moment when Trifram began to give signs that

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he was about to be born. This, as you all remember, comes just after that very subtle disquisition upon the gradual growth of Uncle Toby's Hobby-Horse, which obsesses him like a nightmare, to the neglect and exacerbation of his wound, until Corporal Trim, whose name on the roll, as you know, was James Butler, by the sheer force of his sympathetic genius inserts a new *idea* into the mind of his Master—a *practical* idea, which transforms the said Hobby-Horse from a puzzle and perplexity, a thing of mere maps and mathematics, a thing riding upon Uncle Toby's brain, into a Magic Steed that shall carry Master and Man careering over the green sward of Shandy Hall ; whereon, with grassy sods for outworks, curtains, and bastions, and the jack-boots worn by Sir Roger Shandy at Marston Moor for mortars, the whole history of the War in Flanders may be played out



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according to all the rules of military art.

Now you will remember that while Tristram is making up his mind to sneak into this world of conflicting humours, and while Mr. Shandy and his brother Toby are sitting in the parlour at opposite sides of the fire-place, passing the momentous moments in discoursing upon "the nature of women," Dr. Slop enters, covered with mud from his encounter with Obadiah; who, sent post-haste to summon him, canons with the coach-horse against his pony, and overturns his four-and-a-half-feet of stature with its appended "breadth of back and sesquipedality of belly," into the miry road. You will remember what a spur his sudden advent gives to the Hobby-Horse of Uncle Toby, and the crotchets of Mr. Shandy, a man of too dry and irritable intellect to construct for himself a single well-shaped and comfortable Hobby-Horse,

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from whose back he could tilt victoriously against all the ills of life—like another Tam o' Shanter, "glorious" on his grey mare.

"Your sudden and unexpected arrival," quoth my Uncle Toby, addressing himself to Dr. Slop, "instantly brought the great Stevinus into my head, who, you must know, is a favourite author with me."

"Then," added my father, "I will lay twenty guineas to a single crown-piece that this Stevinus was some engineer or other, or has wrote something or other, either directly or indirectly upon the science of fortification."

"He has so," replied my Uncle Toby.

"I knew it," said my father, "though for the soul of me, I cannot see what kind of connection there can be between Dr. Slop's sudden coming, and a discourse upon fortification ; yet I fear'd it. Talk of what we will, brother—or let the

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occasion be never so foreign or unfit for the subject,—you are sure to bring it in. I would not, brother Toby,” continued my father, “I declare I would not have my head so full of curtains and horn-works”—

“That I dare say you would not,” quoth Dr. Slop, interrupting him, and laughing most immoderately at his pun.

Here we have the scene fairly in swing. Every man is in his humour: Mr. Shandy’s irritability increased by the buzzing of the pun by inuendo, and Uncle Toby set careering on his Hobby-Horse, until his brother’s testiness breaks out, and he pours his scorn upon the gambols of that prancing beast.

“So full is your head of these confounded works, that though my wife is this moment in the pains of labour, and you hear her cry out, yet nothing will serve you but to carry off the man-mid-wife.”

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"*Accoucheur*, if you please," quoth Dr. Slop.

"With all my heart," replied my father, "I don't care what they call you;—but I wish the science of fortification, with all its inventors, at the devil;—it has been the death of thousands, and will be mine in the end."

Then follows that parenthetic aside of the author with the episode of Uncle Toby and the fly.

"Go"—says he, one day at dinner, to an overgrown one which had buzzed about his nose, and tormented him cruelly all dinner-time,—and which, after infinite attempts, he had caught at last, as it flew by him;—"I'll not hurt thee," says my uncle Toby, rising from his chair, and going across the room with the fly in his hand,—“I'll not hurt a hair of thy head:—Go,” says he, lifting up the sash to let it escape;—"go, poor devil, get thee gone, why

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should I hurt thee?—This world is surely wide enough to hold thee and me.”

The scene ends thus:

“I need not tell the reader, if he keeps a Hobby-Horse—that a man’s Hobby-Horse is as tender a part as he has about him; and that these unprovoked strokes at my uncle Toby’s could not be unfelt by him—No;—as I said above, my uncle Toby did feel them, and very sensibly too.”

“Pray, Sir, what said he?—How did he behave?”—“O, Sir!—it was great; for as soon as my father had done insulting his Hobby-Horse—he turned his head, without the least emotion, from Dr. Slop, to whom he was addressing his discourse, and looking up into my father’s face, with a countenance spread over with so much good-nature;—so placid—so fraternal;—so inexpressibly tender to him;—it penetrated my father

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to his heart. He rose up hastily from his chair, and seizing hold of both my uncle Toby's hands as he spoke:—"Brother Toby," said he:—"I beg thy pardon;—forgive, I pray thee, this rash humour which my mother gave me."

"My dear, dear brother," answered my uncle Toby, rising up by my father's help, "say no more about it;—you are heartily welcome, had it been ten times as much, brother."

"But 'tis ungenerous," replied my father, "to hurt any man;—a brother worse;—but to hurt a brother of such gentle manners—so unprovoking—and so unresentful;—'tis base:—By Heaven, 'tis cowardly."

"You are heartily welcome, brother," quoth my uncle Toby—"had it been fifty times as much."—

"Besides, what have I to do, my dear Toby," cried my father, "either with your amusements or your pleasures, un-

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less it was in my power (which it is not) to increase their measure?"

"Brother Shandy," answered my uncle Toby, looking wistfully in his face,—  
"you are much mistaken in this point;—  
for you do increase my pleasure very much, in begetting children for the Shandy family at your time of life."

"But by that, Sir," quoth Dr. Slop,  
"Mr. Shandy increases his own."

—"Not a jot," quoth my father."

Chapter XIII. is a short one, containing only the following bit of dialogue, which briefly epitomizes this Comedy of Humours.

"My brother does it," quoth my uncle Toby, "out of principle."

"In a family way, I suppose," quoth Dr. Slop.

"Pshaw!" said my father—" 'tis not worth talking of."

In Chapter XXVII. of the next Book, we hear of the damage done to Trisme-

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giftus's nose by Dr. Slop's meddling forceps; and in Chapter XIV. of the succeeding one the ill-omened name, Tristram, is by another accident aspersed upon him.

Your Oddship will remember that clause in Mistress Shandy's Marriage Settlement which takes up some three and three-quarter pages of legal language, the gift of which is thus given: "In three words my mother was to lie in, if she chose, in London." But Nemesis has her jade's tricks of grim humour in this world of mice and men; and in the miscarriage of Tristram's nose and name he vicariously pays the penalty of his father's cantankerous enforcement of another (qualifying) clause, said to have been introduced by Uncle Toby—no doubt to protect his brother against female wiles; the effect of which was, in *four* words: That, should Mistress Shandy at any time go up to London



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on a false alarm, she should forfeit her aforesaid right in her next-following pregnancy, and lie in at home.

Hence the tragic intervention of Dr. Slop's forceps, which served *him* for a Hobby-Horse—hence also that slip of Susannah's tongue in carrying the name Trismegistus the length of the corridor, from Mr. Shandy's room where he lay, collapsed by the calamity of the Nose.

"'Tis Tris-something,"—cried Susannah—"There is no christian name in the world," said the curate, beginning with Tris—, but Tristram.—"Then 'tis Tristram-gistus," quoth Susannah.

—"There is no giftus to it, noodle!—'tis my own name," replied the curate, dipping his hand, as he spoke, into the bason.

In these scenes, from which I have filtered off some extractive matter, I say we have a fair specimen of the genius of Sterne. And now, what would you

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have me do with it? Shall I make you a qualitative and quantitative analysis of its elements—*item*, so much fine observation, *item*, so much whimsicality, pathos, satiric tenderness, sympathy for the foibles of human nature? Why I might say as many foolish things about “Tristram Shandy” as the Commentators about Shakspeare’s Plays—to say nothing of his Sonnets; and how much wiser or happier should we all be for my pains? And besides my animal spirits, as I told you, have received a shock. In fact I am not in the humour for such a task.

Sterne’s genius, my Brethren, is like *Radium*; his matter is radiant matter, and a very small quantity of it is enough to produce marvellous effects by its restless bombardment of that phosphorescent substance, the human brain. Perhaps on some future occasion, nearer the Greek Kalends, I may succeed in obtaining a

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larger portion for analysis; but to-night I fight shy of the labour.

This Essay of mine is a terrible thing to have essayed. I started in search of a subject, and now I have lost count of the subjects I have started. I see now that it is, or ought to be, a contrapuntal Essay, and many of the themes are still undeveloped. I must endeavour to combine them into a *finale*, with a graceful *coda*, and somehow before midnight bring it to a close in the tonic.

It would take all Sterne's genius to work it into a really fine piece of counterpoint, and end in triumph. For that "Tristram Shandy," from which I have stolen a *motif*, is the work of a great contrapuntist, in his simultaneous handling of related subjects. As he says himself: "In a word, my work is digressive and progressive at the same time." There is a logical sequence of ideas from the first chapter to the end

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of this "Cock and Bull story," which ends with a restoration of confidence in the Parish Bull. But Sterne's logic is not that of the logicians, with their progression in one dimension of matter, through syllogisms in *Barbara, Celarent, &c.* It is the radiant logic of the imagination which works in a thousand directions at once, in a flash of intuition; and illuminates the trifles of life till they become symbols of the pathetic humours of human nature.

Compare Sterne's commentaries upon his characters with Thackeray's. Thackeray, as we know, was "a Titan of mind," as Charlotte Brontë discovered—a man of genius too. But how his lumbering titanic intellect gets in the way of his genius, in his parochial sermons upon the dallying of his puppets! How *banal* they all seem after a page of Sterne; how paltry after that great discourse of Yorick upon Conscience!

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"Trifram Shandy" is, among other things, an Essay upon the proper spirit and conditions in which the breeding of mankind should be undertaken; how far primitive instinct should be regulated by reason, and so forth—a subject scarcely less important than that of the breeding of cattle, symbolized by Obadiah's cow. But possibly there is a touch of morbidity in Sterne's so frequent use of his curious method of philosophising by indecent suggestion. The book is also a treatise on the delights and dangers of excursions on the Hobby-Horse, and is itself an example of both. It is moreover a subtle critique upon the motives of human action. It is above all, as I have said before, a Comedy of Humours, which holds the mirror up to nature.

At the end we are left with a hope that the union between Uncle Toby and the Widow Wadman, who must serve him instead of that galaxy of beauties,

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his Brother—had he happened to be an Asiatic Monarch, instead of a retired Turkey Merchant—would have selected for him to breed from—we are left, I say, with a hope that this union, if it ever came fairly off, may have had a better issue than Tristram, the fruit of that Shandean philosophy, which reasoned of many things, and effected little; even the cure of a creaking hinge.

I take, for the principal theme of my *Finale*, that other strange Book to which I made a casual allusion, as a prelude to its introduction, "The Anatomy of Melancholy."

Wherein lies the perennial charm of such a rhapsody as this? It is almost as fantastic in its exuberance, and in its handling of materials as "Tristram Shandy" itself; and the "Life and Opinions" of that gentle Humanist and erudite scholar, Robert Burton, in which his richly-attired sibylline melancholy

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broods over grave conceptions of men and things, is a possession for all posterity. I have somewhere read in the Spanish tongue, but where I forget, an anecdote, which in plain English may be thus rendered :

Two travellers were going along a road—in Spain, let us say—that Spain noted for its castles—and found by the wayside a stone with the inscription :

*Here lies buried  
the Soul  
of the Licentiate, Don So-and-so.*

“How can a man’s soul be buried under a stone?” said one, and went upon his way. The other paused and pondered, determined to solve the problem by practical experiment, fetched a wrenching iron, and raised the stone ; under which he found a bag of gold coins.

In that work of his lifetime lies interred the soul of old Burton, or at least

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the treasures it amassed in its buccaneering among books. But they are daintily arranged and exhibited; not as in a museum, nor in the haphazard way in which fragments of antiquity—the marred face, fractured limb, or detached torso of an old statue—were built into the brickwork of those walls which used to exist in the vicinity of Rome before it became a modern capital. Burton is a fine jeweller who sets the antique gems he has collected in the gold of his quaint and racy style, in which, thinking aloud, his soul seems to hold converse with itself, like a hermit from his mountain cell gazing down on the follies and vanities of an insane world; laughing bitterly, with tears in his heart, at the amazing spectacle. “Never so much cause of laughter as now,” he says, “never so many fools and madmen. ’Tis not one Democritus will serve our turn to laugh in these days; we have now



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need of a *Democritus* to laugh at *Democritus*, one jester to flout at another, one fool to leer at another: a great *Sten-torian Democritus* as big as that *Rhodian Colossus*. For now, as Sarisburiensis said in his time, *totus mundus histrionem agit*, the whole world plays the fool; we have a new theatre, a new scene, a new Comedy of Errors, a new company of passionate actors; *Volupiae sacra*, the rites of the Goddess of Pleasure (as Calcaginus wittily feigns in his Apologues) are celebrated all the world over, where all the actors were madmen and fools, and every hour changed habits, or took that which came next."

So he preludes his diatribe against war and its horrors, in which men, driven by lust after pleasure and dominion, become possessed by what he calls "a feral hatred" against their neighbours, until even Christian takes up arms against Christian in the sacred name of religion, and the

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priest becomes a demon, hounding men on to persecution and carnage, for the glory of God and the love of Christ.

Is the world much better now, when we ask drearily: "Who sets the scene and maintains the actors, and who are the audience who understand and enjoy the plot of this Divine Comedy, or farcical tragedy? Who is "He that hath made us, and not we ourselves"? Is he the God of Darwin, that Demiurgus, urging the world recklessly forward along the path of evolution, through æons of tentative experiment and bungling advance, that the fittest may finally survive—if his experiment should haply not fail? Or is there possibly some finer spiritual alchemy working in the still chaotic elements of the seething crucible of the universe?

But these are thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls; let us get back to literature: that store of honey which

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survives the tragic struggle and wreck of lives in the busy human hive. "The Anatomy of Melancholy" is not a mere anthology of quotations. Like Goethe, like Sterne, Burton has sown the seed of many a vegetative thought. Read him continuously, or dip into him here and there, and he sends you on your way with a murmuring sound of cadenced words in your ear—words which sing to the music of a pensive spirit, and awaken more than vague reveries.

Burton has ransacked antiquity for quotations; decking out the rich brocade of his text with as many jewels as shine upon one of Elizabeth's gowns in her portraits. The profusion may be excessive; yet how often does the jewel set off the beauty of the stuff, and the stuff enhance the lustre of the jewel. It is strange how a phrase taken from its context, a line or a stanza from a poem, seems to become more vividly signifi-

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cant, to live with a new life of its own, when set in another man's work as a quotation. Sometimes even a whole poem you know well in its place in the author's pages may acquire a new distinction when you happen on it in an anthology. Many of Burton's jewels, like some of our familiar quotations, are taken from old books that slumber on dusty shelves beneath "Oblivion's Poppy"; books whose authors thus live in the survival of a line or two, and all the rest forgotten. The dullest of us may, once in a while, say a good thing, which someone may perchance find and rescue from the world's waste-paper basket, wherein many things as good sleep for ever.

In literature our sense of greatness depends little on bulk, much on quality. A part may even be greater than the whole; which moral these lines of Ben Jonson point, and of which they are

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themselves an example. Here is a perfect poem, in a single strophe taken from a long Pindaric Ode, in which it was set by the Poet, like a gem in mere metal.

*It is not growing like a tree  
In bulk doth make men better be;  
Or standing long an oak, three hundred  
year,  
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere:  
A lily of a day  
Is fairer far in May,  
Although it fall and die that night;  
It was the plant and flower of light.  
In small proportions we just beauties see;  
And in short measures, life may perfect be.*

What then is the quality or potency by which a book, a poem, a stanza, a sentence, lives and abides in the memory of mankind with an enduring freshness? Many books convey useful information; but the information grows stale, and the

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book withers and dies. It is not merely the thought, but the manner of its expression; not merely the thing said, but the way in which it is said, that charms us in literature. It is a man's imagination—that orchestral music of his whole personality, out of which the thought flies to us on the wings of emotion in his uttered words, which sets our own imagination vibrating, and rouses or delights us.

Here then is the secret of that evasive thing called *style*, which vitalizes the printed page, and gives to each word in a sequence of words a mysterious sense, a whole kaleidoscope of meanings not in the dictionary; because it has become a note in the spiritual music. Style can reanimate what you took for a platitude, and make it fresh as a new-born primrose. Style is that subtle counterpoint of which I spoke, in which all themes are combined, all discords resolved, and the

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piece moves gaily or solemnly to a harmonious close.

That was a philosophic pun with which the Gentle Master startled me from my seat.

And now let me frankly confess that of all the subjects I have strolled after I have not caught one. That "*Hors d'Œuvre*" must be cancelled on the *Menu*.

But what of that? Would you have me run a subject to death? I protest, by the beard of his Oddship, I have not the heart for such butcherly sport! I prefer to watch my themes gambolling about me in the fields of Dreamland, as they have been doing; for I have come to love them, as Cowper his tame hares.

Have I then made you "feed o' the chameleon's dish, promise crammed"? Be thankful for that! Better are the blossoms of promise than the sour apples of performance. I leave you the promise

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of May, with whom I make my exit  
hand in hand, and you are now welcome  
to sit upon my style, or that of any other  
man riper and richer in performance;  
or to career upon your own Hobby-  
Horses.

And so :

God preserve His Oddship,  
and grant him a prosperous Reign,  
Wisheth his Well-Wisher

THE PLAYWRIGHT !

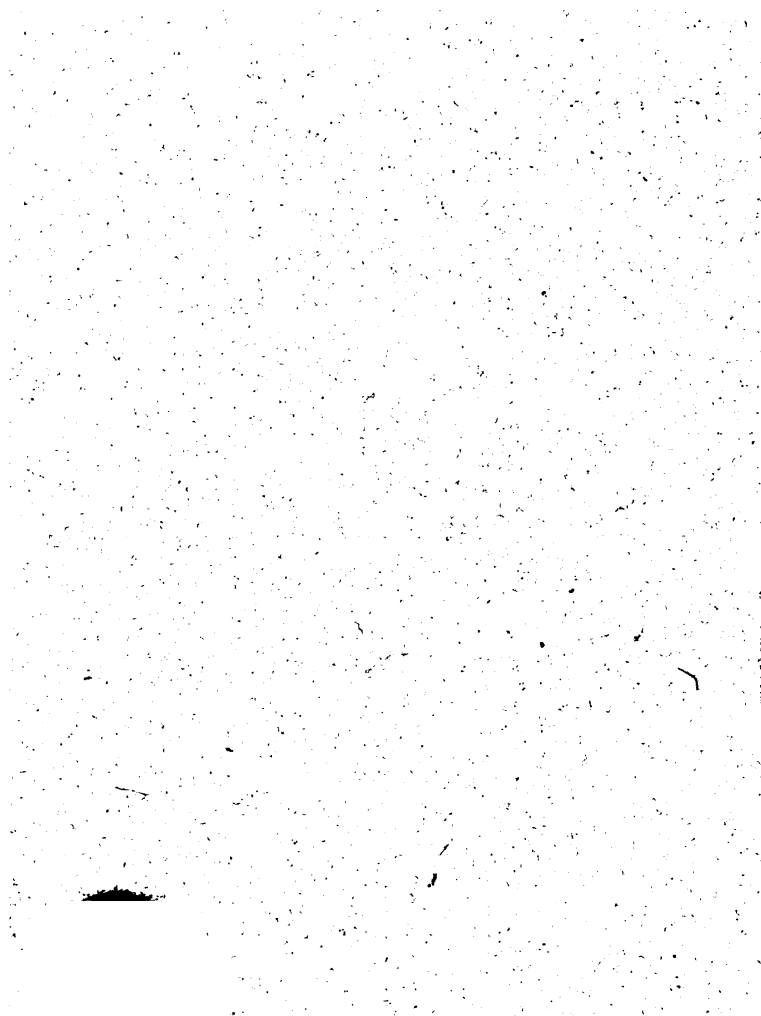




**THOMAS CHALONER**  
**SCHOLEMASTER**

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Sette  
**SETTE OF ODD  
VOLUMES, LI**



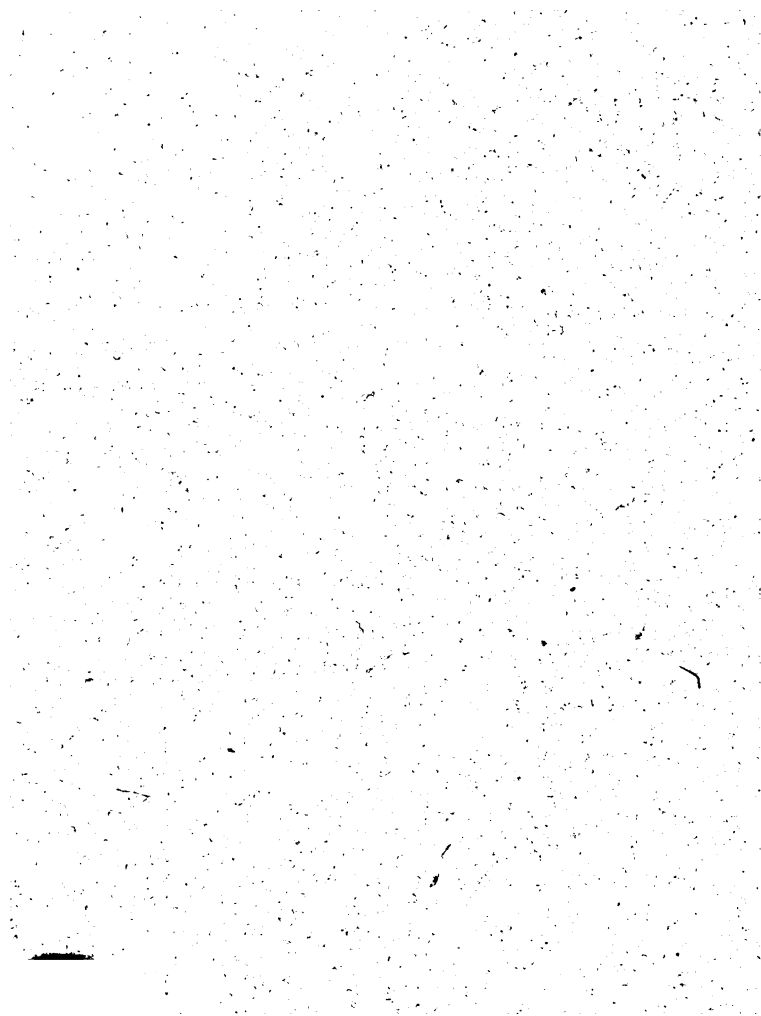


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**THOMAS CHALONER**  
**SCHOLEMASTER**

**READ AT THE TWO-HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIFTH  
MEETING OF THE SETTE OF ODD VOLUMES  
HOLDEN THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY  
OF OCTOBER, MDCCCCIV**

**BY**  
**PERCY ADDLESHAW**  
**SALOPIAN OF THE SETTE**



**IMPRINTED IN LONDON AT THE  
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MDCCCCIV**

**Μείνον παρ' ἡμῖν, καὶ ξενίστιος γένου.**

***Euripides, ALKESTIS, 1103.***

**Grant us your presence for an hour or two;  
We fain would harbour such a guest as you.**

***The Bookbinder.***

**LET THIS BE PRINTED**

**By Order of the Publication Committee**

**CONRAD W. COOKE (*Mechanick*)**

***Secretary of the Publication Committee***





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**D. M.**  
**FREDERICI YORK POWELL**  
**QUI APUD NOSTROS**  
**"IGNORAMUS" AUDIRE VOLUIT**  
**DISCIPULUS NECNON**  
**ET AMICUS**





## IGNORAMUS

THE world has one more empty space,  
Our hearts are empty, too, alas :  
Our eyes must hunger for your face,  
Our ears may never hear you pass.

We loved that magisterial tread,  
We loved the laughter of your jest :  
How envious are the wealthy dead,  
Who rob the living of their best.

Just tell us you will tread once more  
The curving pavements of The High,  
Keen to impart that ampler lore  
Revealed to scholars when they die.

Most kindly judge of strong or weak,  
How can we struggle on alone?  
Who shall the generous orders speak ;  
Who claim the laggards for his own?

Far off, I know, you stand and smile,  
Just as you smiled when with us here;  
And lighter grows each weary mile  
For those you bid to persevere.

So, cheerfully, in joy or pain,  
We'll toil until all labours cease,  
For we shall clasp your hand again :  
Made welcome to your jovial peace.

SALOPIAN.





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**I** AM going to talk to you, for a few minutes, about a great man. I wish that what I have to say could have been better and more completely phrased, chiefly because our beloved *Ignoramus* wanted me to study the history of my hero, and it was his wish that I should write something about him worthy of your attention. I asked him why he did not write himself, but he replied with a jovial imitation of Dr. Johnson: "No, no, I am a Rugby man. They would call me a pirate.

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It is for you to do." I will try. Well I know, however, that what I shall write is hardly worthy of Chaloner or the Sette. But this I feel sure of, that the Sette, understanding my difficulties, from ill-health, short notice, and other causes, will forgive my deficiencies; and Chaloner himself in the great beyond will make light of my faults, realizing that I want to do honour to one whom, as a man, I admire, as a Salopian—your *Salopian*, may I say?—I love.

And first a few preliminary remarks. It is very difficult for a man who feels things strongly to put his case strongly. The man who does not feel his subject is your really emphatic fellow. An average barrister may be eloquent over the woes of *Brown v. Jones*, just because he cares for neither party to the suit. Pleading is a game of skill, and the most level-headed win. But the best work in this world has

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not been done by the level-headed, and never will be. We owe a very small debt to the generations of level-headed people behind us. All that is serious goes from our purses to those who were accounted unusual. When Shakespeare embraced respectability he became a mayor, and the Gods feeling angry, his death promptly, swiftly, and properly followed. Sane men are the dull and stupid people who amass fortunes and acquire respectable tombstones. "No flowers, by request," is their usual eulogium.

Now Chaloner, head master of Shrewsbury School was not, by ordinary standards, a sane man. When he quarrelled he played his part famously: but to quarrel, with art, is rather a sign of real brain power, and not an indication that you pay your pew rent. The *mens sana* is not immediately suggested, though the *in corpore*

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*sano* is; which fact only proves how useless Latin proverbs often are. A hint concerning which tutors and pedagogues might adopt Captain Cuttle's advice: "When found, make a note of."

I am not aware that Chaloner contributed anything of permanent value to English literature, apart from the training of scholars. He wrote some caustic letters, and delightful, but I fear quite wicked and unauthorized comments in the school register. This he stole. It was a pious theft, and Salopians rejoice in so admirable a crime. Honesty compels us to admit, though, that it was petty larceny, and any one of us would have gladly paid the 5s., in lieu of a month, for him. Human beings are queer creatures; not a single historian, and no less than three have dealt with the episode, even suggests blame. They all rejoice as I do, for this paper could scarcely



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have been written otherwise. Chaloner's lapse from honesty is recorded in a silly effort of dishonesty and political spite. In other words he was a great human being; of course he had faults, and the more the better. But I do not suggest he was so great a creative genius as Mrs. Bromfield, who found courage to burst like a hurricane into the hall at Shrewsbury School, where she was matron, and taking an obstreperous juvenile by the ear, call him the "Rampingest-scampingest-rackety-tackety-tow-row-roaringest boy in the whole school." Butler comments on this extraordinary effort of genius. It is quite the longest and strongest word in any language except, perhaps, the Welsh. But Butler says: "Would Mrs. Bromfield have been able to forge and hurl her thunderbolt of a word if she had been taught how to do so, or indeed been at

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much pains to create it at all! It came. It was after all her χάρισμα." At any rate, the good lady was delighted with this example of the spontaneous fluency of her imagination, because it is recorded that, releasing the imp, she added, "Young gentlemen, prayers are excused," and left the hall in triumph. She was right, she had the true artist's touch: her word combined all the qualities of a prayer and a commination.

Chaloner never arrived at this pitch of genius. But then Chaloner was human, and I should not like to make so unflattering a statement about Mrs. Bromfield. It must be said of him, however, what Canon Humphrey wrote of Dr. Butler: "He *did* succeed in making us believe that Latin and Greek were the one thing worth living for." Chaloner put that belief into the noddles of his boys.

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He did another and a bigger thing, he made his scholars love their school, and they followed him in all his wanderings, for they were still at Shrewsbury in spirit. No schoolmaster, however greater in some respects than Chaloner, has achieved so vast a triumph as this. Leipsic and Austerlitz are a poorer apology for Napoleon. Chaloner carried the atmosphere of Salopia with him into every place where he set up school. Here was an achievement! "It is the best filled school in all England," wrote an Elizabethan gentleman. Φιλομαθής πολυμαθής was no idle motto: the school taught her sons to love learning, and so they became learned. They had great possessions, woven of tradition carefully guarded, and scholarship tenderly encouraged. To Chaloner were not given easy days, his was a life of bitter struggle and misunderstanding almost from the

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first day he rode in from Cambridge. A man of high temper, and, like most men of the same temperament, indiscreet; he incurred the anger of the burgesses when once his quality was known. That he has been proved to be always in the right is not to the point. His life was made bitter because no one, save his faithful scholars, saw that he was right at the time. Only idiots, I think, want posthumous veneration. "Life is real, life is earnest," as an American poet of no great merit remarks with, at any rate, some knowledge of the facts. But the grave is its goal, despite Longfellow's comforting assurance. "I would sooner wear a hat than a halo," was the comment of a witty Frenchman when dying. He was quite right, you can buy your hat and know you are alive when you buy it. Halos, here, can only be taken on trust. But good work, big work,

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is done by the men who want the halo. It is one of the curious contradictions of life, and the universe is ruled by a concatenation of them, that your dreamer and enthusiast gets the best of it. Absurd his ideals may be; that matters not a jot: a little human affection butters his bread, he drinks the cheapest tea in the market, he wonders how he can raise the money for his rent, but he is happy. Life means a good deal to him, however stupid it looks to more prosperous people. A great Italian poet remarked that a kiss gave him the world. Very likely it did. It was the only world worth having to him, and he got it. He was lucky though he pretended he wasn't. Chaloner was not lucky and pretended he was, a great rôle to adopt. Even so flippant a poet as Horace could call Virgil "the half of his life," and knew whom to turn to in trouble. Chaloner had

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no one to turn to, though he had troubles beside which the longings of Horace to visit a Sabine farm are the flimsiest persiflage. Though doubtless Horace was sincere enough; he loved Virgil, which did him honour. Chaloner always reminds me irresistibly of Leech, the "Punch" artist, and his race for the bathing machines makes my favourite analogy, "Mary first, Elizabeth second, and Aunt Jane a bad third." I could not possibly explain why or where I get this impression. This much at least is obvious, Chaloner always was like Aunt Jane. I think that is why I like him. He raced as hard as he could, but he never got in first. Chaloners and Aunt Janes never do get in first; but when they have been in their coffins a good many years, reflecting people begin to realize they should have been accounted winners. This being so, one wonders if it is worth

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trying to win; Chaloner thought so, and by curiously suggested phantasmal argument really persuades us that it is. On what grounds did he base his conclusion? Let us sketch his career in barest outline, and consider.

Chaloner was lucky in this, that people believed in him. A great passion may make or mar a life. It generally mars, I am told, though I don't believe it. It is an unpopular weakness; those who cherish one get laughed at, those who rise superior to one become successful curates or thriving solicitors. On the other hand, no good and lasting work is done without its impetus. A poet writes well when the object of his affections cherishes the verses; his rhymes and metres are probably faulty when this ceases to be the condition of affairs. A great passion, whether for an individual or an idea, is the great incent-

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ive. Chaloner had two, but was less lucky in this plurality of numbers than might have been supposed. He was unluckily devoted to his wife, who was a shrew and caused him great unhappiness: he was luckily devoted to learning, which gave him all the happiness and credit he ever obtained. For he lived in troublous times and his ideals were not those of the swash-buckler, whether he stood for King or Parliament. Chaloner was, of course, for the King. When it came to active strife, he always found himself on the losing side. Many good men find themselves in a similar strait: which is worth considering. A considerable deal of philosophy has become eloquent on a smaller text. Though philosophy, it may at once be accorded, is wordy rubbish, it never influenced a human life yet, and it never will. The twentieth century has forgotten



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there is such a science. This lapse of memory will make the prettiest of all readings on its epitaph. A foppish physician once reminded Johnson of his having been in company with him on a former occasion. "I do not remember it, Sir!" The physician still insisted, adding that he that day wore so fine a coat that it must have attracted his notice. "Sir," said Johnson, "had you been dipped in Pactolus, I should not have noticed you." Philosophy generally is dipped in Pactolus, and those who care for the glitter, folly, and real goodness of life, the sea's purple and yellow sandhills, don't notice the dye of Pactolus. But noticed it is through the blot on the map of a man's century, made by his thumb. And Chaloner's made a fairly discursive mark.

Now one fine morning Chaloner rode into Shrewsbury. He carried all the dis-

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tion properly appertaining to a fellow of Jesus College, in the University of Cambridge. He also carried a very resolute will and a determination that Eclipse should be first and the rest nowhere. In his head, too, was a very firm determination to stop the intrigues of the mayor, aldermen, and town council. These gentry were doing their best to wreck the School: and Chaloner saw through their vulgarity and subterfuge. He knew himself to be a saviour, and not a wrecker. He did not care for a meal of minced words, and he never offered the dish to his guests. Old Meighen, his predecessor, had brought a whole corporation to its senses. His successor came with good credentials. "A gentleman" had been asked for, the college appointed one; and town and school had to face Chaloner.

With the school his success was instan-

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taneous. He loved learning, he loved the school, he jealously guarded alike its traditions and its privileges. He had an extraordinary genius for winning the really passionate love of his pupils. His was the rare wisdom that knows knowledge is acquired, not by punishment for a failure or a boyish fault, but by accordin<sup>g</sup> unwearied and gentle encouragement. From all parts of England the gentry sent their sons to him: and had it not been for the malignant effects of civil war, his tenure of office would have been as splendid as Arnold's at Rugby, as Thring's at Uppingham, as Keats' at Eton, as the great Bishop Butler's even at Shrewsbury a hundred and more years afterwards. But one imperishable glory is his, he saved the school in the face of as bitter a persecution as it has ever been asked to face. And he showed a courage as unselfish and

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noble as Sidney, the English Bayard—a Salopian, too—revealed on the bloody field of Zutphen.

At first all was junketing and jollity, for Chaloner, like Falstaff, was no enemy to good liquor. As he invited members of the corporation to join him at his favourite tavern, the townsfolk were friendly and not inclined to be critical. The whole basis of society were undermined if men quarrelled with him who gave them the wherewithal to pledge him in a loving cup. Snakes, though, invaded even this paradise, and ill-conditioned people grumbled at the headmaster's love of good cheer. Chaloner "faced the music," to use an expressive phrase of modern slang. He stood by his pipe and his beer. An elegant author, too modest to reveal his name, he certainly found the exigencies of rhyme somewhat exacting, wrote a poem a hundred years

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ago that I am certain our friend would have put into good Greek iambs if he could have seen it. For the verses, though faulty, are redolent of honest conviction. There are consolations in life no king or parliament may tamper with. A tax on beer had been suggested at the time our indignant poet was inspired. I will give you one verse, for the rest is to hand, in Ashton's collection, in any public library:

I likes a glass of good beer I does,  
I like a glass of good beer I do,  
And damned be the person whoever he be  
That would rob a poor man of his beer.

In the light of recent legislation I fancy the author was a Tory. But so was Chaloner. Nearly all great scholars have felt it a duty to burn a candle or two in honour of Bacchus. Horace boasted shamelessly of his enthusiasm, and covered Falernian

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wine with distinguished compliments: Theocritus saw no reason to apologize: Shakespeare and Ben Jonson talk of the Mermaid Tavern without the ghost of a blush. Dr. Parr roundly asserted "it is a beastly shame for a young man not to lay down sufficient port for his old age." And Porson was justly angry, and replied petulantly in good Greek when his host suggested that if he could not drink another bottle, a candle and a strategic movement to his bedroom was desirable. Οὐδέ τις οὐδέ τι ἄλλο, the learned doctor replied with dignity, and made a good pun too, "neither one nor the other." At Shrewsbury a candle is called a "tolly," the other joke is obvious. "Dowse the tolly" has meant "put out the light" for many a generation. I like to think Chaloner had ready by him answers equally witty and conclusive.

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For when Chaloner rode into Shrewsbury he was warmly welcomed. He had been a boy at the School, and of him it might be said, in the words of a witty old lady addressed to the distinguished author of "Memory's Hark Back," "You are like all Shrewsbury boys, you walk the town as if you loved the very paving-stones." That sort of pride is a good quality, and Chaloner had it in rich and abundant measure. The corporation thought they had the right man, and Jesus College, laughing at the Corporation, knew it had appointed the man the School needed. Cambridge dons did not trouble overmuch about the wishes of the mayors and aldermen in a far-off western town, neither did Chaloner. But what he did was to take the School in hand. It was declining in prestige. In Elizabeth's time it had been so great that no one in England, save

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Ashton the "Chief Master," was considered good enough to talk in Greek to the great princess. Chaloner was determined to restore the fading laurels. Within five years he got together four hundred and seventy-six boys. Even after war had begun, and the town was suffering from military activity, hundreds of boys were sent to him to be trained as decent citizens. No less than seventy applications came from Wales alone. This was in 1643, and that was not a good year for Chaloner or the School.

But as I have said, on his first coming all was revelry and junketing. The costly pageants, the long processions of gilded barges, the gallant masques, still preserved and full of poetry often, that had delighted Ashton, were of the past. With Elizabeth and Sir Henry and Sir Philip Sidney these gorgeous pastimes disappeared. Yet was



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there good fellowship and jollity to be found by whoso would look for it. The bailiffs, who always took so fitting a pride in their office as to be officious, in a letter dated March, 1636, thank the authorities of Jesus College in Cambridge for sending them "so able and every way qualified a schoolmaster." At once the number of boys increased, no less than one hundred and twenty-eight in the first nine months of his tenure being admitted. Unluckily the great war began, fewer scholars could or would not come. All England was in confusion, and even Sabrina had to seek refuge at the bottom of her own stream, where Milton discovered her for his *Comus*. As Chaloner himself writes pathetically, recounting the decrease in the number of his pupils, "Let my successor blame civil war, that acadmies mourn and are desolate, that colonys of the muses are desolate,

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and the number of Shrewsbury School for this year so small." At the time of writing this letter, the corporation, perhaps fired by Chaloner's hospitable instincts and practises at his favourite tavern, entertained the King, though with something of a Judas kiss. Wondering, and awe-stricken, the head master and his boys saw the sad-eyed monarch arrive. Now Chaloner was very loyal to the King, which the burgesses were not, but he was a great deal more loyal to the School. He knew what was going to happen. The King lodged at the Council House by the Dana steps in front of the School, and kept state. He had lost battles, but not yet his kingdom. Before that was in pawn what Chaloner had dreaded came to pass. We know from Marvell's great poem, and from other sources too, how magnificently Charles met his death: but, truth to tell, he avoided

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his debts; he found them more difficult to meet than the great Giver of eternal peace.

Chaloner's loyalty could not be disputed. Silas Taylor the musician, Lord Kilmorey, Sir Thomas Harris, Sir George and Sir Paul, his brothers, all pupils of his, fought for the King. Kilmorey, indeed, was taken a prisoner and died in the Tower. But for all his loyalty Chaloner had business instincts and common sense. Kings come and kings go, he argued, and he hated the parliament; but the School chest was well filled, and he objected to ladling out the money either to parliament or king. Masterful man though he was, however, he had now to do as he was told. Politely though the matter was put to him, he had no way of retreat open. Not only was a Council of War convened, under the presidency of my Lord Capel, but it was held in the School library and the King

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constantly attended. Another terrible time had to be faced. Chaloner was, as became a great scholar, a lover of books. But scribbling paper had run short, and he records, in sorrow and in anger, that the "Notes of Heinsius on the New Testament," given by Mr. Daniel, was stolen away when the King's Commissioner for Artillery sat daily in the library; and that Dr. Andrewes' "Sermons" had been "basely torn by the sacrilegeous fingers of a Scotch camp chaplain." Nobody reads Dr. Andrewes nowadays, but Chaloner was deeply hurt. Yet he was to face fiercer trials than the mutilation and purloining of books. To see a volume misplaced or mishandled troubled him, but the day was at hand when he could no more wander between the east and west windows of the library, when the Wyle Cop even, and his beloved Pride Hill should listen for his

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step in vain. For when the King left Shropshire the time had come for Chaloner to go also. He met the disaster like a man, and he determined to take the school with him and wait for quieter and happier days. To this end he seized the school register and adorned it from time to time, for many years, with odd comments and quaint jests. He was determined not to leave so precious a document in the hands of a Puritan successor, whom he could only regard as an interloper and not the rightful head master at all. Besides, he reflected, the time would come when he should replace his scholars back in their old quarters, and they should once more see the sun rise over the Wrekin and set behind the hills of Stretton, once more watch the coracles dancing on the turbulent Severn waters, and he himself would share with his boys these pleasures dear to his heart.

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There are fervid and pathetic letters of his dating from this period which the curious may read, if they have the heart to. I confess I have only glanced at them. Chaloner's woe, two hundred and odd years old though it is, seems too sacred for prying eyes to gaze at. And I, too, love the place and its traditions: and must ever think it, in the words a great scholar used on a great occasion, to be "the dearest place in all this world to me," though I cannot rival or even imitate the hexameters that enshrine the emotion in the *Sabrinae Corolla*. But Chaloner was no sentimentalist. Even during the siege he enjoyed good company, and tells you so. He frequented the Sextry Inn behind the church of St. Chad, and preserves the list of his companions. Many were of rank in the County, several were clergymen, and one, at least, was an innkeeper. Towards the

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end of the list figures "Mr. Poole, minister," aforetime his rival for the head mastership.

But Chaloner was ill in health and depressed in spirit. Even the merry company at the Sextry gave him small relief from his anxiety. He knew his own reign was as doomed as that of the King. Before leaving the town the unlucky monarch, urged by Dr. Babbington and Lord Falkland, looked for substantial assistance from the school chest. Chaloner knew he would. As I have hinted, the fear haunted him for weary weeks. A sum of six hundred pounds was suggested. Chaloner trembled. Great sums had already been given to the King, Lord Newport having gladly been the donor of £6,000. Willingly or unwillingly this further loan had to be contrived, and Charles acknowledged it as follows:

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**“Trusty and well beloved, we greet you well: whereas you have out of your good affection to our present service, and towards the supply of our extraordinary occasions, lent unto us the sum of £600, being a stock belonging to the School, founded by our royal predecessor King Edward VI., in this our town of Shrewsbury, we do hereby promise that we shall cause the same to be repaid to you whenever you shall demand the same; and shall always remember the loan of it as a very acceptable service unto us. Given under our signet at our Court of Shrewsbury.”**

One account states that as the school chest did not contain £600, a loyal bookseller made up the deficit. This is probably apocryphal, as on the same date the school lent £47 10s. to the town. The story of the loan to the King was not des-



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tined to close with the handing over of the money, for in 1646 a bill was filed in Chancery, the details of which I need not recount, against Gibbons, Chaloner and Thomas and Robert Betton, the latter sons of the late Senior Alderman. This suit annoyed Chaloner to the end of his life. If he had possessed £600 Chaloner would have gladly repaid it to the school chest. But he was a poor man. His income was under £200 a year, and in his day head masters did not amass fortunes. Moreover the Terror had spoken, he had to go. The money, of course, was never repaid. And Chaloner, for all his loyalty, knew that it never would be.

So to Burchall, plucky, and uncomplaining, he went. And he took Shrewsbury School with him. First at Ryton, too, for a short while, he taught with supreme success. And it was a consola-

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tion to him that fathers wrote and talked of sending their boys to him as they might have written when sending them to Shrewsbury. And to him in great numbers they posted. But for the annoyance, and the insults, to a man of quick temper unendurable, the world seemed to smile fairly enough on the exiled chief master. But a Cromwellian looked from his study windows over school gardens, and educated Puritan boys to consider themselves Salopians. This to Chaloner was bitter food indeed. He had not been long at Newnes, or Birchall, "*Aedes Betulaniae*" he called it, before many pupils flocked to him. Birchall was not Shrewsbury, but he amused himself by thinking that he was like that tyrant who, driven from Syracuse, was content to wield the rod at Corinth. Moreover, he took a grave satisfaction in drawing up a list of his tavern friends and

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noting what had become of them, a list he completed later. One had "papisted," as he quaintly puts it, but a great number were dead before the record was closed. Chaloner had a genius for friendship, however, and readily welcomed new friends while remembering tenderly the old.

Then, also, he was being persecuted, and he was a man of courage. He determined on a journey to London to face the matter out with his tormentors. It was a sad journey, even for his endurance and pluck, for he gained no redress and was compelled—bitterest blow of all—to renounce formally his position as head master of Shrewsbury, to which title he had tenaciously clung. His long and devoted services to learning and his school were ignored, he was thrown into prison as a wicked malignant. Some commentators say he was forced to take the coven-

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ant. This libel Chaloner always—I think I am right in asserting this, though my view is disputed strongly—indignantly denied, and to my mind it rests on doubtful, if respectable, evidence. Honestly, there is an enigmatic comment of his in Latin that might mean more than it purports to the eye of a student. I believe Chaloner; whatever his faults of temper, he never lied. Certainly he had to pay a fine of £60. This, however, he acknowledges readily, merely grumbling at the amount. But in prison he was, and how to get out was a problem more exciting than amusing. He had to solve the difficulty by the handing over money he could ill afford to dispense.

However, he now felt that he was safe from interference, he had commuted whatever crime he was supposed to have been guilty of. So, with his indomitable cour-

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age to aid him, he took a larger house at Birchall, and re-opened school near Ellesmere. In five months he had ninety-eight boys, many inheritors of Shrewsbury traditions. The fees were frequently, money being scarce, paid in malt. They who had stood for the King carried lean purses, and Chaloner was not the man to cry out for shillings if he could get pupils. But commodities were not expensive. Some of the school accounts are preserved and contain such items as 1*s.* 2*d.* for Tully's Offices, 1*s.* for a grammar, 1*s.* 8*d.* for stockings, 1*s.* 2*d.* for shoes, and 3*d.* for gloves.

Within eight months he was at last appointed to Drayton by his old friend Sir John Corbett. They had probably played together as boys, for there have always been Corbetts at Shrewsbury. He could not see the Wrekin or Haugmond, it is true, but he acquired no inconsider-

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able promotion and a strong man had openly stood forth as his friend. At last his wanderings seemed over, a school of repute was under his control. Yet the satisfaction was short-lived, the hopes raised were jack-o'-lanterns. Within twenty days of his arrival he got notice to quit by what he calls, with really pardonable anger, "that accursed Committee of Delegates for Shropshire." His powerful friends worked for him in vain, and seeking refuge "in the divine clemency," he was once more a wanderer and an outcast, and very poor. How poor, some accounts he has left behind him prove eloquently. Indeed, it is wonderful how he managed to live at all.

Then came the offer of a small school at Hawarden, and thither he and his little band of pupils betook themselves, gladly. The school was not one primarily for

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gentlemen's sons; he had to abandon his Latin and Greek and teach the ordinary rudiments of English grammar. Most bitterly he resented the task. Well he did it though, and once again his fame spread abroad and scholars flocked around him. Ill luck was at him again, though, with a heavy hand. This time not the Parliament's agents, but the plague in ghastliest guise scattered his pupils. Undaunted still, he moved to Overton, again started school, again got many of his Salopians round him, and in six months could boast a class list of fifty-eight boys. "Gentlemen's sons," he writes, "came to me in incredible quantities." As usual, however, clouds obscured his horizon, and in less than two years he had to fly to Stone in Staffordshire. On the very day he opened school there, thirty-seven aspirants for learning assembled round his

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desk. Fame ran before him even if ill-luck followed in his wake. He opens his register with a pun:

Deo favente auspiciamur. παιδαγωγέιν ἐν τῇ ζωνῇ.

Very shortly he had one hundred and fifty-four names on his books, and mostly familiar names to Salopian ears. Again came persecution, and his wife's death deeply affected him at this time. Heart-broken he abandoned his school and relinquished the profession of schoolmaster. But private tutoring was not to his taste, and he liked his pupils less than he liked his work. "Boys of very small ability," he brusquely calls them. Alas! his one fault was that he could not control his tongue. Often he talked himself into scrapes, despite frequent and honest resolutions, and frequent and honest prayers "that he



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might exercise a stronger restraint over himself in future."

In 1653, however, the indomitable spirit had returned, and he enters gladly on the duties of head master of Ruthven. He at once became a vast favourite all over the country, perhaps too much a favourite, one historian suggests, for we read in his diary such entries as "*Repetita potatio, renovata poenitentia.*" Doubtless, like Mr. Justice Shallow in his youth, he often heard the chimes at midnight even at this stage of his life. But he certainly never concealed the fact, even if he was not proud of it. He was not proud of it, we know that. This much he could say truly, that he never had done a dishonest or a mean thing, and his conversation was of as good a quality as the wine he drank. Little entries of this kind in the diary have been severely commented on. Personally I the

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rather admire the man's honesty in making them. He was probably too severe on himself, and certainly lost neither affection, respect, nor pupils. Nor did he forgo the piety that had been a notable characteristic, for he quaintly writes after an accident sustained while on horseback, "My daily thanks are due to God my Saviour, especially at half-past nine on Sunday," that being the hour and day on which the accident occurred. Yet he was near being driven from Ruthven by his old persecutors. An edict of the Protector's imperilled his position, in that he had by preaching and writing helped to advance the Royal cause. With amazing promptitude and spirit, for Chaloner was no longer young, he set out for London, and had not forgotten the welcome he received on a previous visit. There he argued his case pertinently, and though some time passed

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before a decision was given, he won it, too. Immediately, with a delightful bit of sly humour, he resigned his post and migrated to Newport. His success here was slower than it had formerly been. Increasing infirmities, debts incurred by his sons, and other domestic difficulties, hampered him; but at last he overcame all obstacles and obtained his full meed of credit and reward.

The greatest of all rewards was at hand: for, in 1662, a king was on the throne again, and Chaloner was restored to Shrewsbury with every circumstance of dignity and honour. "I, T.C.," he writes, "after an exile of nineteen years, return to my former province"—adding—"with my second wife and some young gentlemen whom I placed in their several classes on the 4th March." Alas! the triumph was of short duration. One day, less than two years after his return, when the

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scholars, summoned by the school bell, met for prayers, the soul of a great-hearted and brave gentleman had gone forth to meet its maker. Chaloner was dead. But so long as the gorse is yellow on Kingsland, and the turbulent Severn's waters rush under the Welsh bridge towards distant Bristol and the sea, his name will be honoured in the place he loved and worked for. We have noble authority for believing that happy is he who findeth wisdom, so perhaps, despite his troubles, his had been no unhappy life. For assuredly he found wisdom, he fostered it and he shared it.

"Intus si recte ne labora," is a school motto; how finely it applies to Chaloner, especially in the English dress a famous scholar gave to it:

If in thy inmost heart 'tis well,  
Fear not, all 's well.

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O.V.  
QUATRAINS



*Present*



O.V. QUATRAINS



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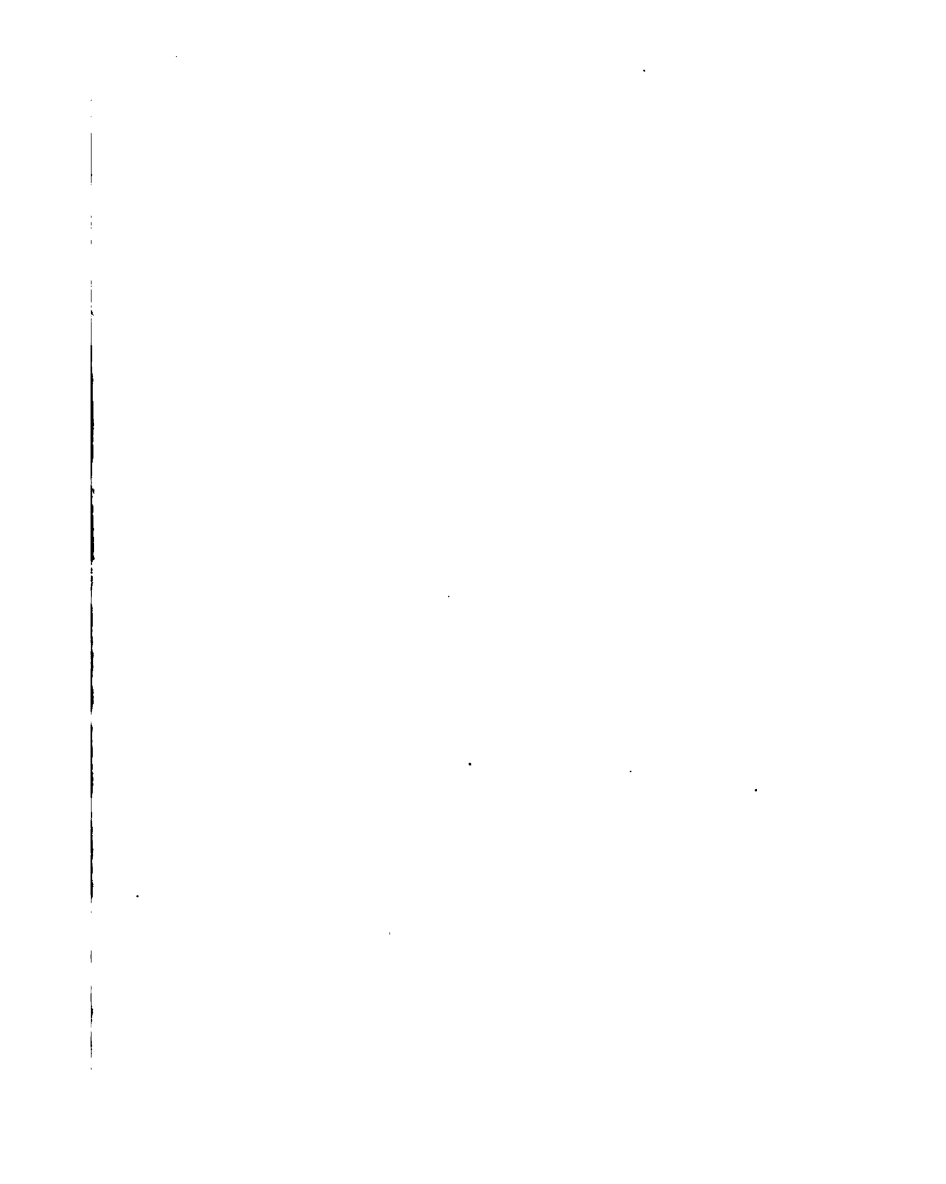
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THE LATE W. MORT THOMPSON,  
*O.V. Historiographer.*

# QUATRAINS

Collected from the Miscellaneous Publications and Scattered Documents of  
**The Sette of Odd Volumes**  
Together with a Fore-Word on the  
Quatrain as a Form of Literary Art

ED

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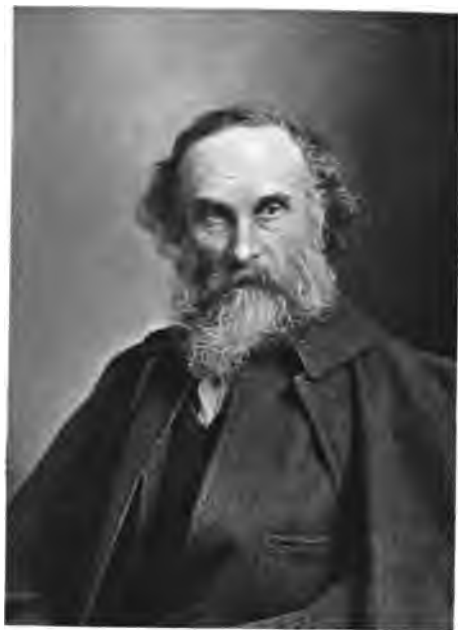
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JOHN TODHUNTER, M.D.

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## FOREWORD

**T**VERY genuine Odd Volume, being in the very promise of his title-page a storehouse of pleasant thoughts, will on occasion reveal a text or two of the cryptic scripture within him, for the amusement or instruction of his Brethren in Sette assembled, and their Guests.

Sometimes his voice becomes the grammophone of his soul. Sometimes he confides his maturer wisdom to his pen, for its more exquisite utterance in prose or verse. Now we are grave, now gay; anon we pass lightly from mood to mood, and, in a word, essay to practise that Gentle Art of Playing the Fool which is the relaxation of the wise—that *Dulce est desipere in*

*loco* so daintily sung in the first immortal Quatrain of our late *Historiographer*, which strikes the keynote of this our *Opusculum*.

Upon the text of that Quatrain the Roman Poet Phædrus, from "the dark backward and abysm of time," supplies us with a fitting commentary. In his Twelfth Fable he tells a symbolic tale of his Greek predecessor Æsop. The story runs thus: One day, when caught playing with nuts among a troop of boys by "a certain Athenian," who *quasi delirum risit*—laughed like one crazy—Æsop turned the laugh against his derider. He laid a bow unstrung in the middle of the road:

*"Arcum retensum posuit in media via."*

"Ho, my wiseacre," says he, "can thy wits unriddle the meaning of what I have done?"

*"Heus," inquit, "sapiens, expedi quid fecerim."*

The wise fellow, having cudgelled his brains for some time without finding an answer, while a crowd



gathered about them, Æsop thus explained his parable:

*“Cito rumpes arcum, semper si tensum habueris;  
At si laxaris, cum voles, erit utilis.”*

“You’ll soon take the spring out of your bow if you keep it always strung; but give it a rest between whiles, and ’twill serve you well at a pinch.” Whereupon Phædrus, *more suo*, thus points the moral: “You must sometimes give your mind a little play, and you will find it will work for you all the better as a thinking machine.”

So much in favour of the Game of Quatrains as a pleasant form of mental relaxation. It befits us now, as philosophers, to ask ourselves what exactly is this thing called a Quatrain, which, like other forms of art, has had something of an evolutionary history of its own. The word Quatrain has hitherto been somewhat vaguely defined in the dictionaries. Even the “New English Dictionary,” wherein we expect to find exceptional accuracy of scholarship, is not suf-

sufficiently precise in its definition: "A stanza of four lines, usually with alternate rimes: four lines of verse." The word "stanza" is misleading; "four lines of verse," vague to inanity. The "Imperial" also says: "A *stanza* of four lines rhyming alternately." Now the word *stanza*, which in Italian means primarily a chamber, or division of a building, is used in poetry to denote one of many similar divisions of a poem, in which the lines are arranged according to a common plan as regards the metre and rhyme-sequence. A Quatrain, in the usual modern sense, is a one-roomed house, a poem in itself; not a section of a poem. Worcester's definition is better: "A piece consisting of four lines, the rhymes usually alternate, sometimes also, especially in French poetry, intermixed, the first and fourth and second and third rhyming together." Brande is given as his authority for this definition.

We have in these three definitions three several conceptions not sufficiently differentiated; and none of them expresses absolutely the essential character-

istics of a perfect Quatrain, in the modern sense of the word. "Four lines of verse," rhymed or unrhymed, are not necessarily a Quatrain. The first four lines of "Paradise Lost," for instance, contain the preliminary clauses of the first period of a long and complicated sentence. We have, however, Dryden's authority for calling the four-lined stanzas of his "Annus Mirabilis," with alternate rhymes, "quatrains." "I have chosen to write my poem in quatrains, or stanzas of four in alternate rhyme." In this sense Gray's "Elegy," and Tennyson's "In Memoriam," though differing in length of lines and arrangement of rhymes, are in quatrains, or "stanzas of four." We may also call a quatrain each of the three sections which precede the final two lines rhyming together in the bastard form of sonnet used by Shakespeare, and perhaps even extend the term to include each half of the octett of a sonnet modelled upon any of the Italian forms, such as Keats's "On first looking into Chapman's Homer."

But the word Quatrain is now used in a more

restricted and important sense, as the name of a distinct poetical species; and I should like to give more precision to Brande's definition of this species, and say that in this sense: "A Quatrain is a poem of four lines, usually rhymed, in which the thought and emotion are clearly and adequately expressed within the limits of the metrical form chosen by the writer." Whether the lines be long or short, rhymed or unrhymed, is immaterial, so long as the prescribed conditions are fulfilled. The rhymes may be alternate, as in Gray's "Elegy"; in contrary motion, as in "In Memoriam"; in two-rhymed couplets, in four lines with a single rhyme, of which two forms examples may be seen on pp. 166 and 167 of Tennyson's "Demeter" volume, or with three lines rhyming together interrupted by one blank line, as in Fitzgerald's "Rubai'yat," and Tennyson's "Daisy" stanza.

This definition, it will be seen, does not exclude either four lines of blank verse, a succession of two-rhymed couplets, or four lines with the same rhymes, as in some of Fitzgerald's Quatrains; but these forms

would seem better fitted for Epigram, being less subtle in cadence than the more familiar ones. While in conciseness the Quatrain closely resembles an Epigram, we expect in its higher forms not merely satiric point, but beauty and grace of expression—poetry, in fact, and not merely clever badinage and light or cynical jesting, though as varieties these are not to be despised. The form, indeed, has infinite possibilities in the hand of a master. As an instance of a perfect Quatrain in a metrical form not commonly used in this *genre*, attention may be directed to Tennyson's lines on the cenotaph of Sir John Franklin in Westminster Abbey:

Not here! the white North has thy bones; and thou,  
Heroic sailor-soul,  
Art passing on thine happier voyage now  
Toward no earthly pole.

I have not seen any four-line blank-verse poem deserving the name of a Quatrain, though such a form is conceivable. Rhyme, however, seems almost essential to a short poem; for it gives what the

Germans call *Klang-farbe*—tone-colouring, and brilliancy. The great qualities of blank verse—its sustained power and subtlety of rhythm and cadence—would be almost inevitably lost in the nutshell of a four-line poem.

Just as the Sonnet may be used in a “sonnet-sequence” almost as if it were one stanza of a long poem, the Quatrain may be used, as Fitzgerald has it, as a member of a quatrain-sequence; each Sonnet or Quatrain being a poem in itself, yet forming an integral portion of a poetical system. Such sequences may be found in this collection; as, for instance, in Brother Silvanus’s “A Feast of Reason and A Flow of Soul” (p. 38), and Mr. Marillier’s “A Toast” (p. 50), each a sequence of two Quatrains; and in our *Laureate’s* “An Evening with the Poets” (p. 47), a sequence of three.

Where two Quatrains are so closely connected with each other as these, they differ from ordinary stanzas chiefly in the feeling of epigrammatic completeness which each induces. It is indeed a “tickel point of

niceness" to explain the difference; yet it may nevertheless be discerned by the reader.

Where two Quatrains are still more closely connected by a single idea, not brought to a definite conclusion in the first, the species might perhaps be called a Double Quatrain. I should be inclined thus to designate those sequences in which the first leaves the subject so distinctly *en l'air*, that the reader is made to expect the second, as in our late Brother Mort Thompson's "Time-Tides" (p. 48); or where the second distinctly depends upon the first, as in my own, "In Arthur's Seat" (p. 29).

There is one form of Quatrain in this collection which, so far as I know, was invented by our late *Historiographer*, and has been adopted in various metrical forms by more than one of the Brethren. This is the Quatrain (p. 25) wherein a short Latin text is stated perpendicularly at the beginning of the four lines—each line being then completed by a free translation of that portion with which that line begins; this paraphrase being applicable to the occasion for

which the verses were written. This form has not as yet, I think, been "conveyed" by Scribes among the Gentiles, but remains an inheritance of the Sette. Besides Mort Thompson's brilliant lines, which have set the fashion, there are others here; one (p. 26) by E. Heron Allen, a former Brother, two by his present *Oddship* (pp. 27 and 37), and four by our *Bookbinder*, Sir Edward Sullivan (pp. 75, 82, 84, and 86)—all worthy descendants of the original Patriarch. In one of the *Bookbinder's* an Alexandrine is used as the closing line, which is unusual in its introduction of this new form of cadence.

Brother Wilsey Martin, who during the Presidency of Brother George C. Haité, our *Art-Critic*, dedicated his charming volume of Quatrains to "the quaint, art-loving, and erudite Fraternity ycleped 'Ye Sette of Odd Volumes,'" deserves our gratitude as the initiator of the practice of writing for the *Menu* Quatrains with a distinct reference to the subject of the Essay of the evening. When his book was published he was not a member of the Sette, but presented a copy to each member then upon the roll.



Since his election as our *Laureate* he has continued to discharge the duties of his office with conspicuous ability, as the many Quatrains he has contributed to this *Opusculum* testify. In their felicity of expression he shows that a poet may "bound himself in a nutshell," yet be "a king of infinite space."

A historical sketch of the use of the Quatrain in English literature would be interesting, but would demand more time than your *Playwright* has at his disposal, besides swelling this Foreword to an inordinate length. Such four-line poems as exist earlier than the nineteenth century are, I think, usually in the form of Epigrams or tombstone verses. Here is a specimen culled from Kendall's "Flovvers of Epigramms" (1577), and sent me by *His Oddsbip*:

*Of a Beggar bearyng hym self for a Physitian.*

You *Medicus* your selfe doe terme,  
But more you are saie I:  
One letter more than *Medicus*<sup>1</sup>  
Your name it hath perdy.

---

<sup>1</sup> This letter is, of course, *n*, making *Medicus*, *Mendicus*.

As an example of tombstone-verses *His Oddsbip* recalls to me the well-known lines:

Affliction sore long time I bore,  
Physicians were in vain,  
Till Heaven did please to give release,  
And ease me of my pain.

To this I may add a punning Epitaph on a Blacksmith, which I deciphered on a tombstone in the churchyard of Thursley, a village near Hindhead:

My Sledge and Hammer lie reclin'd,  
My Bellows they have lost their Wind,  
My Fire is out and Forge decayd,  
And in the Dust my Vice is layd.

Tennyson's lines on Sir John Franklin are an example of this form of poetry *in excelsis*.

Of Landor's great Quatrain, so stern and majestic in the exquisite poise of its words, William Watson has said that no other poem in our language contains such "infinite riches" in such a little room.

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife,  
Nature I loved, and next to nature, art.

I warm'd both hands before the fire of life:  
It sinks; and I am ready to depart.

Mr. Watson is himself the author of many Quatrains, of which this may serve as a specimen:

TO GOETHE.

With earth well pleas'd, thou liv'dst to sing and know;  
Yet somewhat as the stars in thine own song,  
That haste not, neither rest, didst o'er it glow:  
A light that, setting, for more light didst long.

The cultivation of the Quatrain as a distinct poetical species in the latter half of the nineteenth century is, no doubt, due to the popularity of Fitzgerald's "Rubai'yat," in which the form used is, so far as I know, his own invention. The rhymes are arranged in the manner of many of Omar's, the metre of each line being, however, in the ordinary English five-accent decasyllabic verse. In his hands "the thing became a trumpet." He uses it with that "infinite variety" which Ænobarbus found in Cleopatra, making it now Oriental in splendour of metaphor, now humorous, now pathetic, now solemnly cynical, and

always full of colour, imagination, emotion, and flashing thought. Omar seems to have shed his Quatrains on the winds, as his Sultana, the Rose, her odorous petals, without seeking to arrange them in the pattern of a continuous poem. Fitzgerald has given us an epitome of Omar's good-humoured, cynical Pyrrhonism, with a personal note of his own which strongly appeals to us in this age of ours, when faith itself has become speculative, if not sceptical.

What could be finer as an expression of this ever-questioning temper than such lines as these:

O Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,  
And even in Paradise devise the Snake:  
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man  
Is blackened—Man's Forgiveness give—and take!

And these:

Yet ah! that Spring should vanish with the Rose!  
That Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript should close!  
The Nightingale that in the Branches sang,  
Ah! whence and whither flown again, who knows?  
Would but some wingéd Angel ere too late  
Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate,

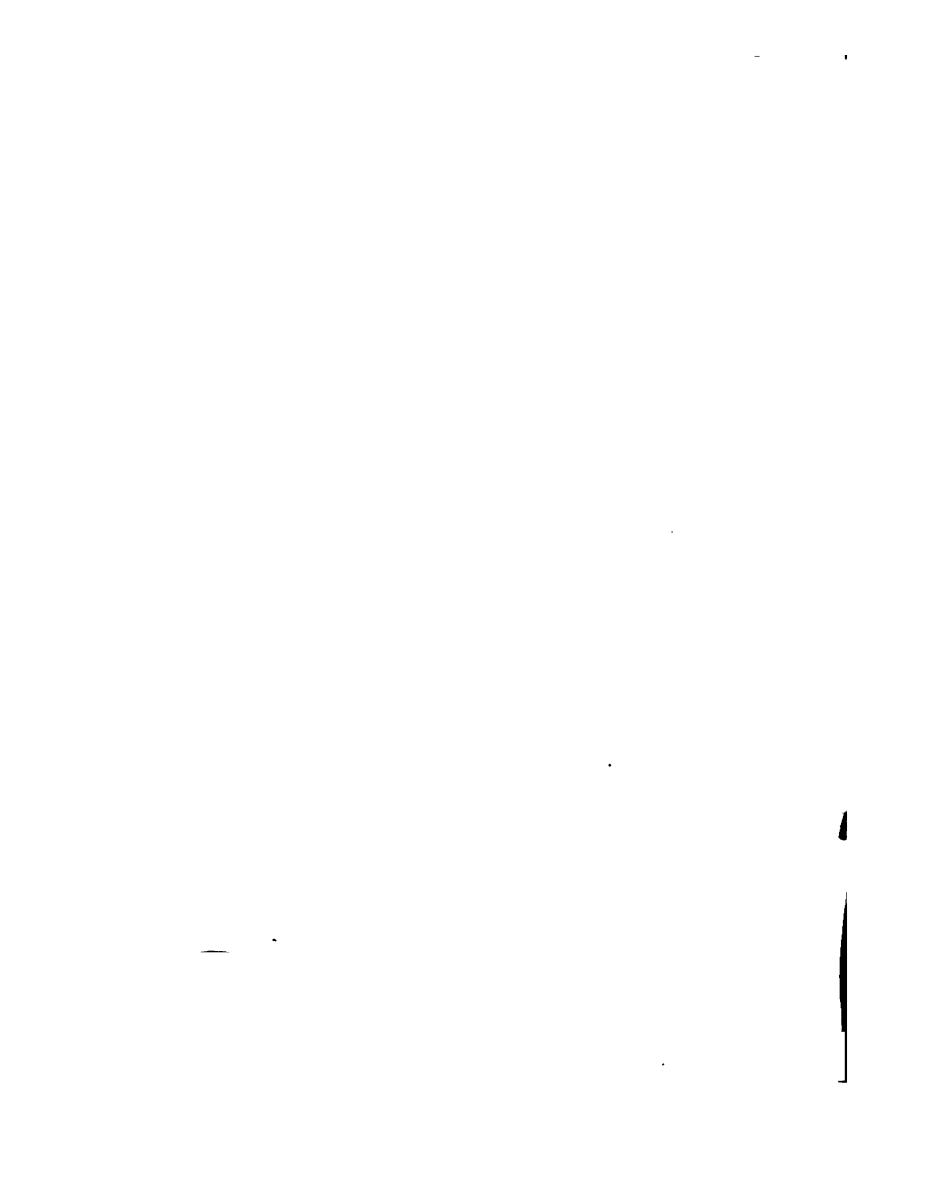
And make the stern Recorder otherwise  
Enregister, or quite obliterate!

Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire  
- To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,  
Would we not shatter it to bits—and then  
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

Here we have a conciseness of expression and a poignancy of all-embracing pathos rare in our literature.

JOHN TODHUNTER,  
*Playwright.*

NOTE.—Some of the pieces included in this collection are not strictly Quatrains, *videlicet* some of those signed with the initials J. T., which, with the exception of "In Arthur's Seat" and "Radium," are mere windlestraws of verse attracted by the magnetic force majeure of *His Oddsbip*. I should have excluded them myself, as guests not having on a wedding garment—unconsidered trifles picked from the highways and hedges and compelled to come in. They should at least sit humbly below the salt.





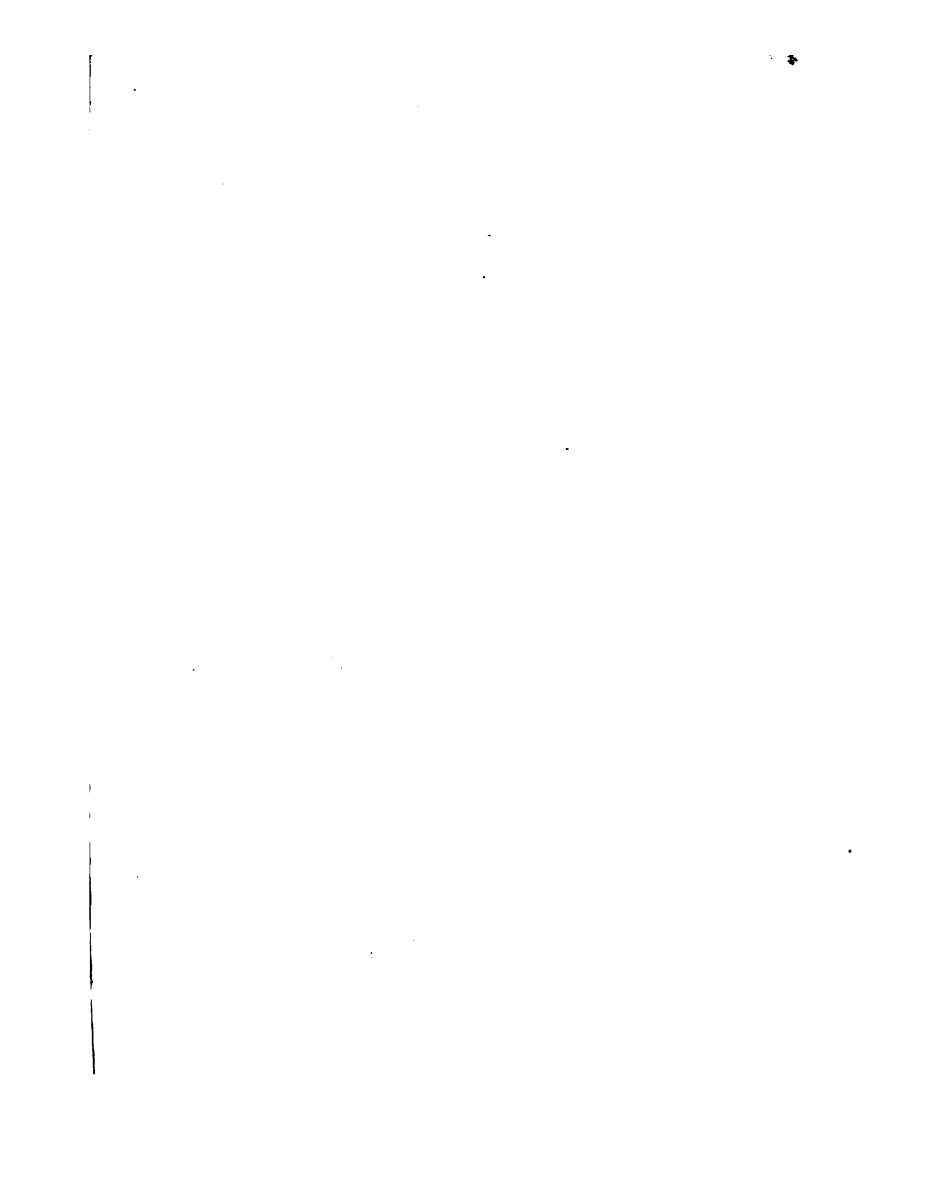



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— W. WILSEY MARTIN,  
O.V. *Laureate.*



## QUATRAINS

### I

DULCE EST DESIPERE IN LOCO

HORACE, *Odes*, IV. 12

DULCE—*Delightful*, says the poet,

EST—is it, and right well we know it,

DESIPERE—to *play the fool*,

IN LOCO—*when we're out of school*.

W. M. T.

[This quatrain, the first of its species, and the one which has figured since on almost every official O. V. publication, made its first appearance in Opusculum III, opposite the list of contents. This Opusculum is dated April, 1883. The actual date when the verse was composed by the *Historiographer* is unknown.]

## II

NEMO MORTALIUM OMNIBUS HORIS SAPIT

PLINY, *Hist. Nat.* VII. 41

NEMO—there 's nobody living I fear,  
MORTALIUM—of mortals who yet have seen light,  
SAPIT—who lives like a hermit, austere  
OMNIBUS HORIS—all day and all night.

E. H. A.

[This Quatrain appeared, first, on p. 8 of Opusculum VII, the  
*Codex Chiromantiae*, dated July 13th, 1883, by Brother  
E. H. Allen, *Necromancer*.]

## III

## A LITERARY RARITY

*Rara Avis in Terris.*JUVENAL, *Sat.* VI. 165

[Written for the Menu of May 1st, 1891, on the occasion of the presentation to the Sette by Brother C. Plumptre Johnson, *Clerke-atte-Lawe*, of a forgotten sketch by Thackeray entitled "Reading a Poem." See *Opusculum* XXVII.]

RARA, welcome if so rare,  
AVIS, whether bird or book;  
IN, on shelves preserved with care  
TERRIS, in our favourite nook.

S. P. T.

## IV

## A WELCOME

[For the Banquet on Ladies' Night, December 4th, 1891.]

EATE, drynke, and be merrie, Guest,  
A thousand Welcomes to our Feaste;  
And a thousand Welcomes more,  
From our Hearte's unstinted store,

To every Ladye here in place,  
Whoo's brighte Eies and whoo's faire Face  
Maketh more fayre, maketh more bright  
December's Gloom than Junë's Light!

Soe welcome all, feastyng yfere,  
Healthe and good Luck, and pleasaunt Cheere!

J. T.

## V

## IN ARTHUR'S SEAT

[From *Year-Book* V, 1892-93, being the sempiternal contemplation of the bard respecting all Presidents at all O.V. Banquets.]

THE mighty world in Arthur's Table Round  
Symbolized once our latest Laureate found;  
I, when His Oddship rules the rampant Sette,  
Find Arthur come again, no less renowned.

With Knights as errant as the winds he dines,  
Pledging Odd Guests in genial words and wines;  
Earth, reeling round him, sees him, like the Sun,  
In mystic revel circle through the Signs.

J. T.

## VI

## A RAINY AUTUMN

[From the Menu of June 3rd, 1892.]

In clinging robes, among her sodden sheaves,  
Grave Autumn moves. Hope lives, though fears be born.  
She sees wild floods lick up her mildew'd corn,  
Yet tells in trust her rosary of leaves.

W. W. M.



## VII

O.V. = A1.

[From the Menu of November 2nd, 1892.]

"MANKIND on this great globe," an O.V. said,

"In Classes two exists, wherever bred.

But two, of countless swarms, north, south, east, west.

Class I: Odd Volumes—and Class II: the rest!"

W. W. M.

## VIII

## SELFLESSNESS

[From the Menu of November 2nd, 1892.]

Ir Self be centre, and thy wants thy end,  
How small the bubble-spheres in thy control!  
But if Mankind—the World will round thee roll,  
And every human planet shine a Friend.

W. W. M.

## IX

## MAGIC MIRRORS

[From the Menu of December 2nd, 1892, on the occasion of the reading of a paper, afterwards printed as Opusculum XXX, entitled "Y<sup>e</sup> Magick Mirrour of Old Japan," by Brother Silvanus P. Thompson, *Magnetiser*.]

*The Arch-Magician*

ART thou a Man? Within thy Mind's high Hall  
A Magic Mirror hangs upon the Wall,  
From out whose Crystal dim the Magian, Thought,  
Summons the Shapes that ravish and appal.

*The Magic Mirror of Old Japan*

NIGHT's Robe to-night with Orient Sorcery gleams—  
Say: "Magic Mirror!" murmur: "Old Japan!"  
Each Sound's a Spell, each Word a Talisman,  
And we but Dreamers in a World of Dreams.

J. T.

## X

## HIS ODDSHIP REIGNS

[Brother Hollingsworth, *Artificer*, succeeds Brother W. Murrell, *Leech*, as President, April 7th, 1893.]

THEY cry, "The King is dead! Long live the King!"  
So cry the Sette, when March through English lanes  
Waves daffodils and leaves of gusty Spring,—  
"His Oddship's dead!—behold! His Oddship reigns!"

W. W. M.

## XI

## FELLOW-FEELING

A PLEA FOR FELLOW-FEELING, AND A REMINDER THAT  
"ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER."

[From the Menu of May 5th, 1893.]

NOR right hand, nor the left, can scratch its back,  
But each can scratch the other's. So true men,  
Though labelled Rights and Lefts, should not be slack  
In scratching one another's now and then.

W. W. M.

## XII

## THE PERFECT SETTE (XLII)

[From the Menu of May 5th, 1893.]

THE whole, you say, is greater than its parts,  
Though each sole part be great and matchless, Yet  
Matching the matchless is the art of arts  
That makes the FORTY-TWO one perfect Sette.

S. P. T.

## XIII

## EVEN OLD HOMER

[From the Menu of May 5th, 1893.]

NONNUNQUAM, *at moments*, as you may construe,  
DORMITAT, *slumbers*, or rather say, nods,  
BONUS, *the excellent*, worthy, and true  
HOMERUS, old *Homer*, who sings of the gods.

S. P. T.

## XIV

## AT O.V. DINNERS

[From the Menu of June 2nd, 1893, on which occasion  
Brother Bernard Quaritch, *Librarian*, exhibited an Olla  
Podrida of Typographical Curiosities.]

*A Feast of Reason*

WHERE O.V.'s banquet, what a splendid store  
Outvies the claims of gastronomic science:—  
Old books, mad rhymes, wild melodies, rare faïence,  
Weird songs, queer prints, quaint customs, and strange lore.

*And a Flow of Soul*

GOOD-FELLOWSHIP and friendship's brimming bowl,  
Frank speech, the courteous quip, the mellow jest,  
These make our gathering to each welcome guest  
A feast of reason and a flow of soul.

S. P. T.



## XV

## SUMMER

[From the Menu of October 6th, 1893.]

STAY, bright-haired Summer, with thy roses crowned;  
Be mine for aye: bend down thy ripe-lipp'd mouth  
And kiss me with the passion of the South.  
Stay, Stay! . . . She's gone! The brown leaves strew  
the ground.

W. W. M.

## XVI

## THE LADIES' NIGHT

[From the Menu of January 25th, 1894.]

## I

THE birds in the trees, and the bees in the flowers,  
And all happy things in the light;  
But if you would see an ecstatic O.V.,  
Take a view on 'a Ladies' Night.

## II

A BROTHER alone is a *fraction* at best,  
A lone human fraction is he.  
But join'd with fair daughters, and his better three-quarters,  
A happy *whole number* is he.

W. W. M.

## XVII

## RES RUSTICA

WITH APOLOGIES TO MR. JESSE COLLINGS, M.P.

[From the Menu of February 2nd, 1894, when a paper on  
"Tudor Writers on Husbandrie" (Opusculum XXXIV)  
was read to the Sette by Brother Sir Ernest Clarke,  
*Yeoman*.]

A LITTLE rood well-tilled was farm enow  
For villeins in the times of Henry Tudor;  
But in these gerrymandering days, *prob pudor*!  
Each villain wants three acres and a cow.

S. P. T.

## XVIII

## SUCCESSION

[Brother Francis Elgar, *Shipwright*, succeeds Brother A. T. Hollingsworth, *Artificer*, as President, May 4th, 1894.]

THE Chair is vacant scarce a minute's reach.

The new bud springs; the year's leaf takes its rest.

One comes, one goes; who fills the Chair is best;

But in our hearts we hold the hands of each!

W. W. M.

## XIX

## OPTICKS

[From the Menu of June 1st, 1894, when a paper, entitled  
"Odd Corners in Opticks," was read by Brother Silvanus  
P. Thompson, *Magnetiser*.]

*Ὅρασις facit multa demiranda.*

AULUS GELLIUS, *Noctes Atticae*, Lib. XVI, cap. xviii.

"OPTICKS hath many marvels," quoth the sage;  
It hath odd corners, wonders unexplored.  
Gaze ye, O friends, who sit around our board,  
Nor deem such toys unworthy of the age.

S. P. T.

## XX

## AN ODD EVENING

[From the Menu of July 6th, 1894.]

COME quip, come crank, come flash and fire of wit!  
O Brothers of the nimble tongue and brain,  
Shake our dull sides till laughter touches pain.  
We will acquit you—so your jokes be fit.

W. W. M.

## XXI

## AUTUMN

[From the Menu of October 12th, 1894.]

VINE-CROWNED, wind-kist, blue-eyed, sweet, smiling, bland,  
Queen Autumn piles her gifts of fruit and grain.  
She hears the Harvest hymns, the Homing strain,  
And moves with stately steps through all the land.

W. W. M.

## XXII

## LOYALTY

[From the Menu of November 2nd, 1894, on which occasion a paper was read by Brother H. B. Wheatley, *Recorder*, on "The Early History of the Royal Society," Opusculum XXXV.]

ODD Volumes! we are nothing if not loyal.

To hospitality we give our best.

So, though no Prince we number as our guest,

Let our *society* be truly *royal*.

S. P. T.



## XXIII

## AN EVENING WITH THE POETS,

## OUR HONOURED GUESTS.

[At the meeting on December 7th, 1894, the topic was the Poetry of William Barnes. Amongst the Guests present were Mr. Edmund Gosse, Mr. Walter Raymond, Mr. W. B. Yeats, and M. Gabriel Mourey.]

## I

NATURE's dry husk the Poet-souls ignite  
In their pure flame: subjectively they trace,  
Beneath the veil, her spirit-breathing face:  
And all her beauty blazes in their light.

## II

Whence come the soundless call and voiceless speech  
The Poet hears? Perchance, beyond the sight,  
The rhythmic pinions of the Infinite  
May pause in flight within his spirit's reach.

## III

A Poet, true to Art and God, not read  
In his life-space, but who when gone receives  
Full meed, is like sweet woodruff, in whose leaves  
Men find no perfume until they be dead.

W. W. M.

## XXIV

## TIME-TIDES

1894-1895

[From the Menu of January 4th, 1895.]

EBB out, ebb out, sad Old Year's tide!  
Bitter-sweet memories bear away—  
Dirges of bright young hopes that died:  
Our ill-starred hopes of yesterday.

Flow in, flow in, glad New Year's tide!  
And bring new hopes, so bright that we  
Awhile forget they too may hide  
Bitter-sweet memories yet to be.

W. M. T.

## XXV

## DAFFODILS

[From the Menu of March 8th, 1895.]

A SMILE of last year's sun stray'd down the hills,  
And lost its way within a windy wood;  
Lost through the months of snow—but not for good;  
March found it in a clump of daffodils.

W. W. M.

## XXVI

## A TOAST

FOR THAT MOST EXCELLENT AND ESTEEMED SOCIETY  
THE ODD VOLUMES  
BEING A CONCEIT UPON THEIR MOTTO: THERE IS A  
DIVINITY IN ODD NUMBERS

[From the Menu of April 5th, 1895.]

DIVINITY doth shape our *ends*,  
According to the Poet;  
But wider still its function tends,  
And we Odd Volumes know it.

Divinity doth shape our *odds*,  
If mottoes count a ha'puth;  
So here 's to him of all the gods,  
Our "Odds and ends" who shapeth.

H. C. M.

## XXVII

## COLLECTING

[From the Menu of May 3rd, 1895, on the occasion of the reading by Brother R. Le Gallienne, *Rhymer*, of Opusculum XXXIX, "On Some Ideal Aspects of the Collector."]

## I

Go to! I will collect no precious thing  
Inwrought of subtlest brain or deftest hand;  
The young May sunshine warms the waken'd land;  
The Spring is here! I will collect the Spring.

## II

Her colours in the woods of ancient trees,  
Where varnish'd buds are bursting into leaf;  
Her hedgerow stars that shine on human grief;  
I will collect no curios but these.

W. W. M.

## XXVIII

## IN MEMORIAM

HENRY MOORE, R.A., *Ancient Mariner*.

Died June 22nd, 1895.

## I

God's sea—its vast unfathom'd deeps,  
Its breakers thundering into foam,  
Its breath of blue, its azure dome—  
These things he knew: and now he sleeps.

## II

His place is vacant in our Sette.  
He fill'd it well. He play'd his part.  
His genial worth, his potent art  
The Brotherhood will not forget.

W. W. M.

## XXIX

## ONE FRIEND

Who hath one friend of straight and loyal mind,  
But one, of all the million swarms of men,  
Is strong beyond the energy of ten,  
Is rich beyond the level of mankind.

## ONE COMRADE

That man is happy, who in stress of life  
Hath one good comrade ever at his side,  
One strong true soul; and happy he indeed,  
Whose lips can call such friend and comrade—Wife.

W. W. M.

[The above quatrains appeared on the Menu of the Ladies'  
Night, November 1st, 1895.]

XXX

## WELCOME

[February 10th, 1896.]

THIS pleasant fact we're anxious to impart;  
His Oddship gives to you  
A welcome warm and true,  
A welcome of the Hand and Heart!

W. W. M.



## XXXI

## KEMBLE'S ART

[From the Menu of June 12th, 1896, when a paper was read  
by Brother H. B. Wheatley, *Recorder*, on "The Acting  
of Shakespeare's Plays."]

THE Player is less great than that he plays,  
Save, when in true presentment, genius springs;  
Then dead bones live, and spirit wakes and sings:  
Thus Kemble's art keeps green our Shakespeare's bays.

W. W. M.

## XXXII

## OVERHEARD

[Written on the Menu of October 2nd, 1896, on the occasion of the reading of a paper entitled "On the Trail of a Serpent"—an inquiry into the use of the serpent in the Marks of the early Printers—by Brother Silvanus P. Thompson, *Magnetizer*.]

"ON Serpent's trail, thro' blue electric blizzard,  
Black magic this?" Nay, Science up-to-date:  
But had he lived within Time's middle gate,  
They would have burnt our Brother as a Wizard.

W. W. M.

## XXXIII

## INAUGURAL

[From the Menu of April 2nd, 1897, at the Inaugural Dinner,  
when the Chair of the Sette was taken by Brother Alfred  
East, R.A., *Landscape-painter*.]

THE old sun sets. The ruler of our feast  
Yields up his rule; yet still retains a part,  
The warm niche fill'd within each Brother's heart.  
But see! A new Sun blazes in the EAST.

W. W. M.

## XXXIV

## IN MEMORIAM

ALDERMAN SIR GEORGE R. TYLER, BARONET,  
O.V. *Stationer*. Died November 26th, 1897.

THE oak lives long, but only lives its day ;  
Man lives his life, but passes soon away.  
The bracken springs in green and fades to brown,  
And over all God's quiet stars look down.

W. W. M.

## XXXV

TO HIS BROTHER, WILFRID BALL,  
ON HIS ILLUSTRATION TO THE MENU, JAN. 14TH, 1898

[At this dinner the paper read, and afterwards published as  
Opusculum XLIII, was entitled "A Riverside Walk:  
an Easy-Going Essay by a Peripatetic Philosopher," by  
Brother John Todhunter, *Playwright* to the Sette.]

By Mortlock Reach I love to chew the cud  
Of sweet and bitter fancies, when the stream  
Leaves to the artist those rich wastes of mud  
O'er whose mysterious charm poets might dream.

And you, dear Ball, have felt that mystery too,  
That charm which comes but with the ebbing tide;  
All the shy poetry of this river-side  
Is caught and set to music here by you.

J. T.

## XXXVI

## IN MEMORIAM

Brother W. MORT THOMPSON, O.V. *Historiographer*.

Died March 10th, 1898.

AFTER the noonday, the night,  
After life's sowings we reap,  
After life's labour comes sleep,  
And after darkness, the tender beneficent light.

W. W. M.

## XXXVII

[A Distich from the Menu of the Ladies' Night, May 21st,  
1898.]

'Odzooks! 'Odzounds! 'Odsfish! and 'Ods-my-Life!  
Here 's each Odd Volume odder by a wife!

H. C. M.

## XXXVIII

## FROM WARM SEA-SANDS

[From the Menu of October 28th, 1898.]

## I

FROM warm sea-sands, from rocks with salt spray wet,  
From Highland steeps, from breezy English downs,  
From dreamy loiterings in old-world towns,  
The Brethren come to form their social Sette.

## II

They meet, they greet, they dine. No aims beyond  
The social code are seen—and yet, behind  
Convivial pleasantries, who seeks may find  
Some strands of kindness in the O.V. bond.

W. W. M.



## XXXIX

## AN EVENING WITH HEINE

[From the Menu of February 28th, 1899, when a paper was  
read by Brother J. Todhunter, *Playwright*, on Heine.]

## I

STRONG singer of the German land, whose lyre  
Gave many tones,—now fierce as wingèd fire,  
Now low and tender as the night-bird's song  
When his brown mate is nesting in the briar.

## II

He knew not England. We forgive the sneer,  
The gibe. He loved our Shakespeare, crowned him peer,—  
World-peer of all the Poets of all time—  
For this we greet him, hail him, hold him dear!

W. W. M.

## XL

## IN EXITU PRAESIDENTIS

[From the Menu of March 28th, 1899, at the close of the year of office of Brother Sir Ernest Clarke, *Yeoman*, as President, and of Brother H. C. Marillier, *Knight-Errant*, as Secretary.]



SEE you how but a little while ago  
Rose in his might the Sun and sank anon ;  
So Ninety-eight gives place to Ninety-nine,  
And we depart, our year-long duties done.

Across the sinking orb a sea-bird flits,  
And homeward bound the rich sea-harvest quits;  
    So comes to all an end of toil at last,  
And where his Oddship reigned Another sits.

H. C. M.

## XLI

## IN MEMORIAM

BERNARD QUARITCH, O.V. *Librarian*, First President  
and Foundation Member of the Sette.

Died December 17th, 1899.

FAREWELL, old friend. Wise Founder of our Sette;  
World-famous in the spheres of books and men—  
Now, pass'd within the veil, beyond our ken.  
Peace, Peace! The Brotherhood will not forget.

W. W. M.

## XLII

## FRIENDSHIP

## I

SOME friendships are like leaves; when skies are fair  
Their green flags flutter, making glad the day;  
But when the chill winds blow, they fall away,  
And leave the quiv'ring branches cold and bare.

## II

Break not an ancient friendship! Keep it hale.  
Stir round its roots that it be green of heart.  
Let not the spirit of its growth depart:  
It is a power to brave the fiercest gale.

W. W. M.

## XLIII

## TO ALL YE LADYES

WHO NOWE DOE GRACE OUR BANQUET

[From the Menu of February 26th, 1901.]

WELCOME, deare Ladyes! For with you glad Spring  
Reigns in our Heartes, whence Winter's gloom hath fled  
*Ave!* to the New Centurie now we sing,  
And *Requiescat* to the Centurie dead.

J. T.

## XLIV

## THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH

[From the Menu of April 23rd, 1901, on the occasion of  
Brother John Todhunter, *Playwright*, vacating the  
Presidency in favour of Brother Paul Bevan, *Ready  
Reckoner*.]

Nowe as the setting Sun goes to his Bed  
In the oblivious Waters of the West,  
Look how his rising Brother's fiery Head  
Peers in the East, to glorious Taske address!

J. T

## XLV

## VERBA VIRUMQUE

[On the occasion of the reading of a paper entitled "The Mirror of the Century," on October 22nd, 1901, afterwards printed as Opusculum XLVIII, by Brother W. F. Lord, *Dominie*.]

## I

*Words*

WORDS are the stranded foam the sea-winds blew,  
Or bloom-snow falling in the springing weeks,  
Unless the *inner-self* of him who speaks  
Stand out behind the words, as good and true!

## II

*The Man*

Brain-lightnings—lurid gleams—mad hopes and fears,  
Converging to one point—like lens-caught rays—  
The Brethren's prayer: "A Man to Guide our Ways!"  
The hour has come—and *Dominie* appears!

W. W. M.



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[Pencilled, impromptu, on the same Menu, by H. Thomson  
Lyon, since then initiated into the Sette as *Expert*:]

In this Quatrain where mingled figures toss  
In psycho-mental, photographic term,  
The sentiment which proves to be its germ  
Is simply: "Dominie dirige nos!"

**XLVI****UNION**

[From the Menu of May 26th, 1903.]

**SCORN** not the aid one loyal mind can bring;  
A noble growth expands by slow degrees.  
Not all at once leaves clothe the wintry trees,  
But each burst bud helps on the greening Spring.

**W. W. M.**

## XLVII

## FRATERNITY

[From the Menu of May 26th, 1903.]

**FRATERNITY** is one long circling chain

Of equal links, steel-strong: break one, break all:

It holds true minds in gently tempered thrall,

And gives league-strength to meet Life's tug and strain.

W. W. M.

## XLVIII

## RADIUM

[From the Menu of November 24th, 1903, when a discourse  
was made by Brother Silvanus P. Thompson, *Magnetizer*,  
in a darkened room, upon the phenomena of Radium.]

THE freaks of Radium are extremely odd:

With the last wave of Nature's conjuring-rod

She hatched this Will-o'-the-Wisp, whose impish rays  
Lead Science wandering on through wilds untrod.

J. T.

## XLIX

## DE TE FABULA NARRATUR

[Written for the occasion, on January 29th, 1904, when a paper upon "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" was read by Brother Silvanus P. Thompson, *Magnetizer*.]

*To the Magnetizer*

DE TE—*of thee thyself*, magnetic brother  
(And well the Sette wots it can be no other),  
FABULA—*the Story*—here retold anew—  
NARRATUR—*runs*, though now no tale, but true.  
E. S.

[Added after the reading of the paper printed as Opusculum  
LIII.]

NAY, nay, dear Oddship, theory won't avail—  
For 'neath thy sway our senses have grown riper;  
And now we know the meaning of the Tale:—  
We play the Children's part, and *thou* 'rt the Piper.  
E. S.

## L

## TRISTRAM SHANDY

[From the Menu of May 31st, 1904, when a paper was read by Brother J. Todhunter, *Playwright*, entitled "An Essay in Search of a Subject," which was subsequently printed as Opusculum L, and presented to the Sette by Brother J. Lane, *Bibliographer*.]

## I

Nor where the wine-cup foams, and riot swells,  
'Midst world-worn Beauty's evanescent spells,  
Seek we the Master of that style so rare,  
Whose every page a simple story tells.

## II

Stern in naught else but name, calm, genial, free;  
Though homely grace alone commendeth thee,  
Yet shall thy "Tristram" and "poor Yorick" wear  
The bays of English Immortality.

E. S.

## LI

## TO STERNE

[From the Menu of May 31st, 1904.]

STERNE! We who read thy books with no stern face,  
And leave to bores and prudes the condemnation  
Of Sterne's own snuff, and Sterne's own sternutation  
Through flebile tracts, Thee! demure Satyr, chase.

W. F. L.

## LII

## CARPE NOCTEM

[From the Menu of June 28th, 1904, a meeting at which the Brethren brought rare volumes, first editions, select autographs, portraits, inscribed copies and other mementos of deceased authors, whom they introduced as their "guests."]

ALTHOUGH we hear Elysian fields are pleasant,  
Earthwards Elysian feet are hurrying fast;  
Because, to-night, Odd Volumes of the present  
Welcome the rare Odd Volumes of the past.

P. A.



## LIII

## TWO DISTICHS

[From the Menu of October 25th, 1904.]

## I

*To the Stranger within Our Gates*

Μεῖνον παρ' ἡμῖν, καὶ ξυνέστιος γενοῦ.

EURIPIDES, *Alkestis*, 1103.

GRANT us your presence for an hour or two;  
We fain would harbour such a guest as you.

E. S.

## II

*To Hys Oddsbyppe and Hys Flock*

"Pan curat oves oviumque magistros"

VIRGILIUS, *Bucolica*, ii, 33.

The sprightlie Sonne of hym that taught men Witte  
and Eloquence,  
Greate Pan himselfe, guardeth y<sup>e</sup> Sette and y<sup>e</sup> Sette's  
Presidents.

E. S.

## LIV

## DRY DINNERS

[From the Menu of November 22nd, 1904, on the occasion of the reading by Brother Paul Bevan, *Ready-Reckoner*, of a paper entitled "A Diet of Dry Dinners."]

As all good fellows like good cheer,  
Feeding their wits on beef and beer:  
Those phantom banquets please the most  
When *Ready-Reckoner* plays the host.

P. A.

## LV

## FIRST CATCH YOUR HARE

[From the Menu of November 22nd, 1904, when a paper was read by Brother P. Bevan, *Ready Reckner*, entitled "A Diet of Dry Dinners, or a Cook's Excursion into English Gastronomics during the Seventeenth and other Centuries."]

WHEN Mrs. Glasse declared in ancient days,  
"First catch your hare," of dishes *à la braise*  
Men dreamed, and soups and stews which she alone  
Could teach the serving of in cook-like ways.

Yet could it be she merely wished to dig  
A joke at those whose tonsures showed too big?  
Meaning, to wit, that when the hare's your own,  
Then only may you know it's not a wig.

E. S.

## LVI

## PRO PATRIA

"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori"

HORACE, *Odes*, III. 2

[From the Menu of January 24th, 1905.]

DULCE ET—'tis *sweet and*, this all men should know,  
DECORUM'ST—*seemly*, both in friend and foe,  
PRO PATRIA—*for the land that each loves best*,  
MORI—to *fight*, and *fighting find one's rest*.

E. S.

## LVII

## EXORCISM

To a Brother O. V. who complained that he was growing old,  
and disliked the very name of "Limmer's," because he  
could no longer enjoy the dinners of the Sette as in his  
younger days.

*We Die Daily*

Not once alone but divers times we die;  
Some shred of rind or fruit we shroud each day.  
When ghosts of dead sensations round you play,  
Shout—O on V! The Limmer-spook will fly!

W. W. M.

## ENGINEER

"I'm not a man of words."

—THE ENGINEER

There is a lot of work in the world.

I'm not a man of words—when you are in the field,  
I'm all—no more—no more, I'm all right.  
I'm not a man of words—when you are in the field,  
I'm all—no more—no more, I'm all right.  
I'm not a man of words—when you are in the field,  
I'm all—no more—no more, I'm all right.

11. 11.

## LIX

## THE CURSE OF SWIFT

To a Brother O. V. who sorrowfully said that, being an  
Irishman, the "Curse of Swift" was upon him

SAY not "The Curse of Swift" is thine; but say  
Thou sharest his fame with that green Isle of birth,  
Whose gifts of genius, courage, grit, and worth,  
Have helped our Empire to Imperial sway!

W. W. M.

## LX

## O TEMPORA

"Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis"

TEMPORA MUTANTUR — *times change*, 'neath  
Fashion's stress,  
ET NOS—*and we*, for all man's steadfastness,  
MUTAMUR—*change*, in books, beliefs, and aim,  
IN ILLIS—*with the times*; yet dream we're still the  
same.

E. S.



## LXI

## LADIES' NIGHT

[From the Menu of February 28th, 1905.]

'Tis sad when Summer's pride fleets fast away,  
And brown leaves falling bruise her withering flow'rs;  
And sad when Autumn, with its wistful hours,  
Yields to chill Winter in too short a day.

Yet why recall the wreck of yesteryear,  
The Season's dulling change, old Time's despite,  
While a young year is breaking, and to-night  
The Springlike grace of Womankind is here?

E. S.

THIS garland of Quatrains was collected from the miscellaneous documents of the Sette of Odd Volumes by their unworthie President, Silvanus P. Thompson, *Magnetiser*, and, together with suitable Forewords by Brother John Todhunter, *Playwright*, is now imprinted at the charges of Brother Francis Elgar, *Shipwright*, to the number of one hundred and ninety-nine copies, for the private delectation of the Sette, by Charles Whittingham and Company at the Chiswick Press, this twenty-fourth day of June in the year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Five. God save the King, and the Members of the Sette of Odd Volumes.

